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MARY ANDERSON

THE STORY OF HER LIFE

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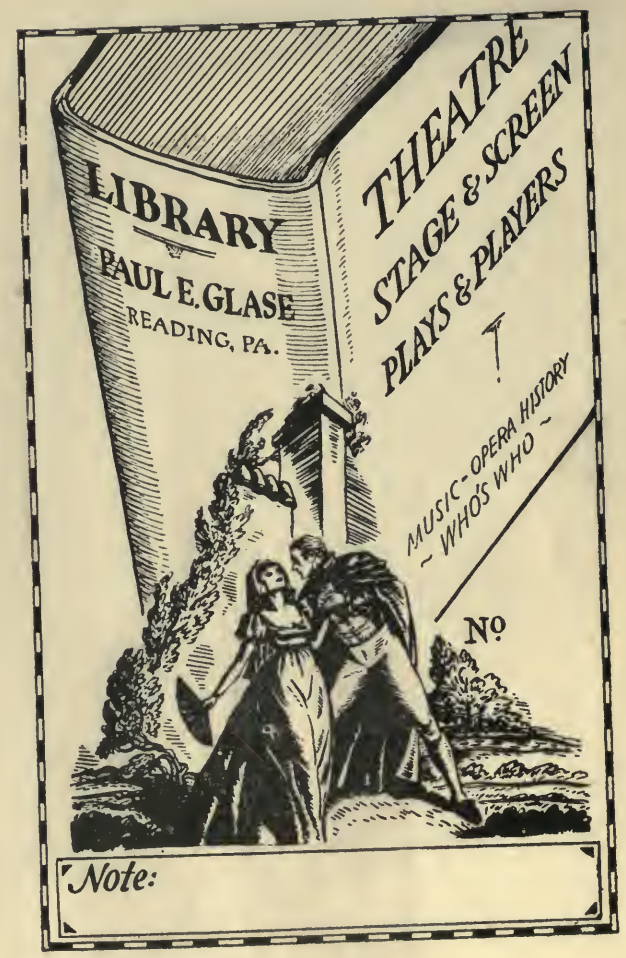
Life and Professional Career, by Farrar, *with port. in steel from original drawings by Van der Weyde*, 4to, blue cl., Published in England as an appreciation of the American actress who became endeared to the English Theatre-going Public, [illegible] 1884

Mary Anderson, the celebrated American, was born in California in 1859—her father, a confederate officer, was killed in the Civil War. Her debut as Juliet at Louisville in 1875 was successful, and she played with increasing popularity in the chief cities of the Union and (after 1883) in England.



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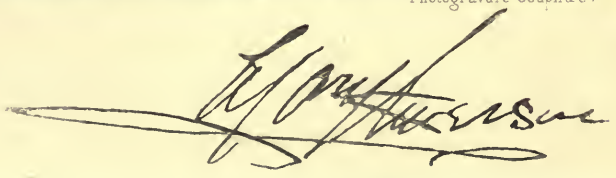

MARY ANDERSON

THE STORY OF HER LIFE

AND

PROFESSIONAL CAREER

BY

J. M. FARRAR, M.A.

Author of "Five Years in Minnesota," &c.

With a Portrait on Steel

FROM AN ORIGINAL DRAWING BY HENRY VAN DER WEYDE

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TO

MRS. HAMILTON GRIFFIN

IS INSCRIBED

WITH SINCERE REGARD,

THIS SKETCH

OF

HER DAUGHTER'S LIFE.

PREFACE.

THE writer of these pages feels some diffidence in presenting them to the public. They are a sketch—incomplete as any such sketch must be—of an artist whose career, if her life be prolonged, can hardly be said to have more than begun. There is a charm too in Mary Anderson, in her enthusiasm for her art, in her high and cultivated intelligence, in her sweet and gracious womanliness, which are far more easily felt than described. Very few actresses—none, indeed, of other than English birth—have so endeared themselves to the English theatre-going public. Rare, indeed, are the names of those who have inspired friendships so warm among some of the most gifted Englishmen and Englishwomen of their time. To have known Mary Anderson intimately is to have lived in the sunshine. To think of her is to be reminded of a line of the great poet of her native land :—

"When she passed, it seemed like the ceasing of exquisite music."

J. M. F.

LONDON.
October, 1884

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MARY ANDERSON.

Chapter I.

AT HOME.

LONG BRANCH, one of America's most famous watering-places, in midsummer, its softly-wooded hills dotted here and there with picturesque "frame" villas of dazzling white, and below the purple Atlantic sweeping in restlessly on to the New Jersey shore. The sultry day has been one of summer storm, and the waves are tipped still with crests of snowy foam, though now the sun is sinking peacefully to rest amid banks of cloud, aflame with rose and violet and gold.

About a mile back from the shore stands a rambling country house embosomed in a small park a few acres in extent, and immediately surrounding it masses of the magnificent shrub known as Rose of Sharon, in full bloom, in which the walls of

snowy white, with their windows gleaming in the sun-light, seem set as in a bed of colour. The air is full of perfume. The scent of flower and tree rises gratefully from the rain-laden earth. The birds make the air musical with song; and here and there in the neighbouring wood, the pretty brown squirrels spring from branch to branch, and dash down with their gambols the rain-drops in a diamond spray. A broad verandah covered with luxuriant honey-suckle and clematis stretches along the eastern front of the house, and the wide bay window thrown open just now to the summer wind seems framed in flowers. As we approach nearer, the deep, rich notes of an organ strike upon the ear. Some one, with seeming unconsciousness, is producing a sweet passionate music, which changes momentarily with the player's passing mood. We pause an instant and look into the room. Here is a picture which might be called "a dream of fair women." Seated at the organ in the subdued light is a young woman of a strange, almost startling beauty. Her graceful figure clad in a simple black robe, unrelieved by a single ornament, is slight, and almost girlish, though there is a rounded fulness in its lines which betrays that womanhood has been reached. A small classic head carried with easy grace; finely chiselled features; full, deep, grey eyes; and crowning all a wealth of auburn hair, from which peeps, as she turns, a pink, shell-like ear; these complete a picture which seems to belong to another clime and another age, and lives hardly but on the canvas of Titian. We are almost sorry to enter the room and break the spell. Mary Anderson's manner as she starts up from the organ with a light elastic spring to greet her visitors, is singularly gracious and

winning. There is a frank fearlessness in the beautiful speaking eyes so full of poetry and soul, a mingled tenderness and decision in the mouth, with an utter absence of that self-consciousness and coquetry which often mar the charm of even the most beautiful face. This is the artist's study to which she flies back gladly, now and then, for a few weeks' rest and relaxation from the exacting life of a strolling player, whose days are spent wandering in pursuit of her profession over the vast continent which stretches from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Here she may be found often busy with her part when the faint rose begins to steal over the tree tops at early dawn; or sometimes when the world is asleep, and the only sounds are the wind, as it sighs mournfully through the neighbouring wood, or the far-off murmur of the Atlantic waves as they dash sullenly upon the beach. On a still summer's night she will wander sometimes, a fair Rosalind, such as Shakespeare would have loved, in the neighbouring grove, and wake its silent echoes as she recites the Great Master's lines; or she will stand upon the flower-clad verandah, under the moonlight, her hair stirred softly by the summer wind, and it becomes to her the balcony from which Juliet murmurs the story of her love to a ghostly Romeo beneath.

A large English deerhound, who was dozing at her feet when we entered the room, starts up with his mistress, and after a lazy stretch seems to ask to join in the welcome. Mary Anderson explains that he is an old favourite, dear from his resemblance to a hound which figures in some of the portraits of Mary Queen of Scots. He has failed ignominiously in an attempted training for a dramatic career, and can do no more

than howl a doleful and distracting accompaniment to his mistress's voice in singing. We glance round the room, and see that the walls are covered with portraits of eminent actors, living and dead, with here and there bookcases filled with favourite dramatic authors; in a corner a bust of Shakespeare; and on a velvet stand a stage dagger, which once belonged to Sarah Siddons. Over the mantelpiece is a huge elk's head, which fell to the rifle of General Crook, and was presented to Mary Anderson by that renowned American hunter; and here, under a glass case, is a stuffed hawk, a deceased actor and former colleague. Dressed in appropriate costume he used to take the part of *The Hawk* in Sheridan Knowles's comedy of "Love," in which Mary Anderson played the *Countess*. The story of this bird's training is as characteristic of her passion for stage realism as of that indomitable power of will to overcome obstacles, to which much of her success is due. She determined to have a live hawk for the part instead of the conventional stuffed one of the stage, and with some difficulty procured a half-wild bird from a menagerie. Arming herself with strong spectacles and heavy gauntlets, she spent many a weary day in the painful process of "taming the shrew." After a long struggle, in which she came off sometimes torn and bleeding, the bird was taught to fly from the falconer's shoulder on to her outstretched finger, and stay there while she recited the lines—

> "How nature fashioned him for his bold trade!
> Gave him his stars of eyes to range abroad,
> His wings of glorious spread to mow the air
> And breast of might to use them!"

and then, by tickling his feet, he would fly off and flap his wings appropriately, while she went on—

> "I delight
> To fly my hawk. The hawk's a glorious bird;
> Obedient—yet a daring, dauntless bird!"

Here, too, are her guitar and zither, on both which instruments Mary Anderson is a proficient.

And now that we have seen all her treasures, we must follow her to the top of the house, from which is obtained a fine view of the Atlantic as it races in mighty waves on to the beach at Long Branch. She declares that in the offing, among the snowy craft which dance at anchor there, can be distinguished her pretty steam yacht, *The Galatea.*

Night is falling fast, but with that impulsiveness which is so characteristic of her, Mary Anderson insists upon our paying a visit to the stables to see her favourite mare, Maggie Logan. Poor Maggie is now blind with age, but in her palmy days she could carry her mistress, who is a splendid horsewoman, in a flight of five miles across the prairie in sixteen minutes. As we enter the box, Maggie turns her pretty head at sound of the familiar voice, and in response to a gentle hint, her mistress produces a piece of sugar from her pocket. As Mary Anderson strokes the fine thoroughbred head, we think the pair are not very much unlike. Meanwhile, Maggie's stable companion cranes his beautiful neck over the side of the box, and begs for the caress which is not denied him.

Night has fallen now in earnest, and the beaming coloured boy holds his lantern to guide us along the path, while Maggie whinnies

after us her adieu. The grasshoppers chirp merrily in the sodden grass, and now and then a startled rabbit darts out of the wood and crosses close to our feet. The light is almost blinding as we enter the cheerful dining room, where supper is laid on the snowy cloth, and are introduced to the charming family circle of the Long Branch villa. Though it is the home now of an old Southerner, Mary Anderson's step-father, it is a favourite trysting-place with Grant, the hero of the North, with Sherman, and many another famous man, between whom and the South there raged twenty years ago so deadly and prolonged a feud. While not actually a daughter of the South by birth, Mary Anderson is such by early education and associations, and to these grim old soldiers she seems often the emblem of Peace, as they sit in the pretty drawing-room at Long Branch, and listen, sometimes with tear-dimmed eyes, to the sweet tones of her voice as she sings for them their favourite songs.

Chapter II.

BIRTH AND EDUCATION.

SELDOM has a more charming story been written than that of Mary Anderson's childhood and youth to the time when, a beautiful girl of sixteen, she made her *début* in what has ever since remained her favourite *rôle*, *Juliet*—and the only Juliet who has ever played the part at the same age since Fanny Kemble.

There was nothing in her home surroundings to guide in the direction of a dramatic career; indeed her parents seem to have entertained the not uncommon dread of the temptations and dangers of a stage life for their daughter, and only yielded at last before the earnest passionate purpose to which so much of Mary Anderson's after success is due. They bent wisely at length before the mysterious power of genius which shone out in the beautiful child long before she was able fully to understand whither the resistless promptings to tread the "mimic stage of life" were leading her. In the end the New World gained an actress of whom it may well be proud, and the Old World has been fain to confess that it has no monopoly of the highest types of histrionic genius.

Mary Anderson was born at Sacramento, on the Pacific slope, on the 28th of July, 1859, but removed with her parents to Kentucky, when but six months old. German and English blood are mingled in her veins, her mother being of German descent, while her father was the grandson of an Englishman. On the outbreak of the Civil War he joined the ranks of the Southern armies, and fell fighting under the Confederate flag before Mobile. When but three years old Mary Anderson was left fatherless, and a year or two afterwards she and her little brother Joseph found almost more than a father's love and care in her mother's second husband, Dr. Hamilton Griffin, an old Southern planter, who had abandoned his plantations at the outbreak of the war, and after a successful career as an army surgeon, established himself in practice at Louisville.

Mary Anderson's early years were characteristic of her future. She was one of those children whose wild artist nature chafes under the restraints of home and school life. Generous to a fault, the life and soul of her companions, yet to control her taxed to their utmost the parental resources; and it must be admitted she was the torment of her teachers. Her wild exuberant spirits overleaped the bounds of school life, and sometimes made order and discipline difficult of enforcement. She was never known to tell an untruth, but at the same time she would never confess to a fault. Imprisoned often for punishment in a room, she would stedfastly refuse to admit that she had done wrong, and, maternal patience exhausted, the mutinous little culprit had commonly to be released impenitent and unconfessed. Indeed, her wildness acquired for her the name of "Little Mustang;" as,

later on, her fondness for poring over books beyond her childish years that of "Little Newspaper." At school, the confession must be made, she was refractory and idle. The prosaic routine of school life was dull and distasteful to the child, who, at ten years of age, found her highest delight in the plays of Shakespeare. Many of her school hours were spent in a corner, face to the wall, and with a book on her head, to restrain the mischievous habit of making faces at her companions, which used to convulse the school with ill-suppressed laughter. She would sally forth in the morning with her little satchel, fresh and neat as a daisy, to return at night with frock in rents, and all the buttons, if any way ornamental, given away in an impulsive generosity to her school mates. It soon became evident that she would learn little or nothing at school; and on a faithful promise to amend her ways if she might only leave and pursue her studies at home, Mary Anderson was permitted, when but thirteen years of age, to terminate her school career. But instead of studying "Magnall's Questions," or becoming better acquainted with "The Use of the Globes," she spent most of her time in devouring the pages of Shakespeare, and committing favourite passages to memory. To her childish fancy they seemed to open the gates of dreamland, where she could hold converse with a world peopled by heroes, and live a life apart from the prosaic everyday existence which surrounded her in a modern American town. Shakespeare was the teacher who replaced the "school mar'm," with her dull and formal lessons. Her quick perceptive mind grasped his great and noble thoughts, which gave a vigour and robustness to her mental growth. Since those days she has

assimilated rather than acquired knowledge, and there are now few women of her age whose information is more varied, or whose conversation displays greater mental culture, and higher intellectual development. Strangely enough, it was the male characters of Shakespeare which touched Mary Anderson's youthful fancy; and she studied with a passionate ardour such parts as *Hamlet*, *Romeo*, and *Richard III.* With the wonderful intuition of an art-nature, she seems to have felt that the cultivation of the voice was a first essential to success. She ransacked her father's library for works on elocution, and discovering on one occasion "Rush on the Voice," proceeded, for many weeks before it became known to her parents, to commence under its guidance the task of building up a somewhat weak and ineffective organ into a voice capable of expressing with ease the whole gamut of feeling from the fiercest passion to the tenderest sentiment, and which can fill with a whisper the largest theatre.

The passion for a theatrical career seems to have been born in the child. At ten she would recite passages from Shakespeare, and arrange her room to represent appropriately the stage scene. Her first visit to the theatre was when she was about twelve, one winter's evening, to see a fairy piece called "Puck." The house was only a short distance from her home at Louisville, and she and her little brother presented themselves at the entrance door hours before the time announced for the performance. The doorkeeper happened to observe the children, and thinking they would freeze standing outside in the wintry wind, good naturedly opened the door and admitted Mary Anderson to Paradise—or what seemed like it to her—the empty benches of the dress circle, the

dim half-light, the mysterious horizon of dull green curtain, beyond which lay Fairyland. Here for two or three hours she sat entranced, till the peanut boy made his appearance to herald the approach of the glories of the evening. From that date the die of Mary Anderson's destiny was cast. The theatre became her world. She looked with admiring interest on a super, or even a bill-sticker, as they passed the windows of her father's house; and an actor seen in the streets in the flesh filled her with the same reverent awe and admiration as though the gods had descended from their serene heights to mingle in the dust with common mortals. We are not sure that she still retains this among the other illusions of her youth!

The person who seems to have fixed Mary Anderson's theatrical destiny was one Henry Woude. He had been an actor of some distinction on the American stage, which he had, however, abandoned for the pulpit. Mr. Woude happened to be one of her father's patients, and the conversation turning one day upon Mary's passion for a theatrical career, the old actor expressed a wish to hear her read. He was enthusiastic in praise of the power and promise displayed by the self-trained girl, and declared to the astonished father that in his youthful daughter he possessed a second Rachel. Mr. Woude advised an immediate training for a dramatic career; but the parental repugnance to the stage was not yet overcome, and Mary remained a while longer to pursue, as best she might, her dramatic studies in her own home, and with no other teachers than the artistic instinct which had already guided her so far on the path to eventual triumph and success.

When, in her fourteenth year, Mary Anderson saw for the first time a really great actor. Edwin Booth came on a starring tour to Louisville, and she witnessed his *Richard III.*, one of the actor's most powerful impersonations. That night was a new revelation to her in dramatic art, and she returned home to lie awake for hours, sleepless from excitement, and pondering whether it were possible that she could ever wield the same magic power. She commenced at once the serious study of *Richard III.* The manner of Booth was carefully copied, and that great artist would doubtless have been as much amused as flattered to note the servility with which his rendering of the part was adhered to. A preliminary rehearsal took place in the kitchen before a little coloured girl, some years Mary Anderson's senior, who had that devoted attachment to her young mistress often found in the coloured races to the whites. Dinah was so much terrified by the fierce declamation that she almost went into hysterics, and rushing upstairs begged the mother to come down and see what was the matter with "Miss Mami," as she was affectionately called at home. Consent was at length obtained to a little drawing-room entertainment at home of *Richard III.*, with Miss Mary Anderson for the first and last time in the title *rôle*. For some months the young *débutante* had carefully saved her pocket money for the purchase of an appropriate costume, and resisting, as best she might, the attractions of the sweetmeat shop, managed to accumulate five dollars. With her mother's help a little costume was got up—a purple satin tunic, green silk cape, and plumed hat—and wearing the traditional hump, the youthful representative of *Richard* appeared for the first time before an audience in the Tent

Scene, preceded by the Cottage Scene from *The Lady of Lyons.* The back drawing-room was arranged as a stage; her mother acting as prompter, though her help was little needed; and, judged by the enthusiastic applause of friends and neighbours, the performance was a great success. The young actress received it all with even more apparent coolness than if she had trodden the boards for years, and made her exits with the calm dignity which she had observed to be Edwin Booth's manner under similar circumstances. Indeed, Booth became to her childish fancy the divinity who could open to her the door of the stage she longed so ardently to reach. She confided to the little coloured girl a plan to save their money, and fly to New York to Mr. Booth, and ask him to place her on the stage. Dinah entered heartily into the affair, and at one time they had managed to hoard as much as five dollars for the carrying out of this romantic scheme. Some years afterwards when the wish of her heart had been long accomplished, Mary Anderson made Mr. Booth's acquaintance, and recounting to him her childish fancy asked what he would have done if she had succeeded in presenting herself to him in New York. "Why, my child, I should have taken you down to the depôt, bought a couple of tickets for Louisville, and given you in charge of the conductor," was the rather discouraging answer of the great tragedian.

Not long afterwards Mary Anderson's dramatic powers were submitted to the critical judgment of Miss Cushman. That great actress, then in the zenith of her fame, was residing not far distant at Cincinnati. Accompanied by her mother, Mary presented herself at Miss Cushman's hotel. They happened to meet in the vestibule.

The veteran actress took the young aspirant's hand with her accustomed vigorous grasp, to which Mary, not to be outdone, nerved herself to respond in kind; and patting her at the same time affectionately on the cheek, invited her to read before her on an early morning. When Miss Cushman had entered her waiting carriage, Mary Anderson, with her wonted veneration for what pertained to the stage, begged that she might be allowed to be the first to sit in the chair that had been occupied for a few moments by the great actress. Miss Cushman's verdict was highly favourable. "You have," she said, "three essential requisites for the stage: voice, personality, and gesture. With a year's longer study and some training, you may venture to make an appearance before the public." Miss Cushman recommended that she should take lessons from the younger Vandenhoff, who was at the time a successful dramatic teacher in New York. A year from that date occurred the actress's lamented death, almost on the very day of Mary Anderson's *début.*

Returning home thus encouraged, her dramatic studies were resumed with fresh ardour. The question of the New York project was anxiously debated in the family councils. It was at length decided that Mary Anderson should receive some regular training for the stage; and accompanied by her mother she was soon afterwards on her way to the Empire City, full of happiness and pride that the dream of her life seemed now within reach of attainment. Vandenhoff was paid a hundred dollars for ten lessons, and taught his pupil mainly the necessary stage business. This was, strictly speaking, Mary Anderson's only professional training for a dramatic career. The stories which have been current since her appearance in London, as to her having been a

pupil of Cushman, or of other distinguished American artists, are entirely apocryphal, and have been evolved by the critics who have given them to the world out of that fertile soil, their own inner consciousness. There is certainly no circumstance in her career which reflects more credit on Mary Anderson than that her success, and the high position as an artist she has won thus early in life, are due to her own almost unaided efforts. Well may it be said of her—

> "What merit to be dropped on fortune's hill?
> The honour is to mount it."

Chapter III.

EARLY YEARS ON THE STAGE.

BETWEEN eight and nine years ago, Mary Anderson made her *début* at Louisville, in the home of her childhood, and before an audience, many of whom had known her from a child. This was how it came about. The season had not been very successful at Macaulay's Theatre, and one Milnes Levick, an English stock-actor of the company, happened to be in some pecuniary difficulties, and in need of funds to leave the town. The manager bethought him of Mary Anderson, and conceived the bold idea of producing "Romeo and Juliet," with the untried young novice in the *rôle* of *Juliet* for poor Levick's benefit. It was on a Thursday that the proposition was made to her by the manager at the theatre, and the performance was to take place on the following Saturday. Mary, almost wild with delight, gave an eager acceptance if she could but obtain her parents' consent. The passers-by turned many of them that day to look at the beautiful girl, who flew almost panting through the streets to reach her home. The bell handle actually broke in her impetuous eager hands. The answer was "Yes," and at length the dream of

her life was realised. On the following Saturday, the 27th of November, 1875, after only a single rehearsal, and wearing the borrowed costume of the manager's wife, who happened to be about the same size as herself, and without the slightest "make up," Mary Anderson appeared as one of Shakespeare's favourite heroines. She was announced in the playbills thus :—

JULIET . . By a Louisville Young Lady
(Her first appearance on any stage).

The theatre was packed from curiosity, and this is what the *Louisville Courier* said of the performance next morning.

Louisville Courier, November 28th, 1875.

"We can scarcely bring ourselves to speak of the young actress, who came before the footlights last night, with the coolness of a critic and a spectator. An interest in native genius and young endeavour, in courage and brave effort that arrives from so near us —our own city—precludes the possibility of standing outside of sympathy, and peering in with analyzing and judicial glance. But we do not think that any man of judgment who witnessed Miss Anderson's acting of Juliet, can doubt that she is a great actress. In the latter scenes she interpreted the very spirit and soul of tragedy, and thrilled the whole house into silence by the depth of her passion and her power. She is essentially a tragic genuis, and began really to act only after the scene in which her nurse tells Juliet of what she supposes is her lover's death. The quick gasp, the terrified stricken face, the tottering step, the passionate and heart-rending accents were nature's own marks of affecting overwhelming grief. Miss Anderson has great power over the lower tones of her rich voice. Her whisper electrifies and penetrates; her hurried words in the passion of the scene, where she drinks the sleeping potion, and afterwards in the catastrophe at the end, although very far

below conversational pitch, came to the ear with distinctness and with wonderful effect. In the final scene she reached the climax of her acting, which, from the time of TYBALT'S death to the end, was full of tragic power that we have never seen excelled. It will be observed that we have placed the merit of this actress (in our opinion) for the most part in her deeper and more sombre powers, and despite the high praise that we more gladly offer as her due, we cannot be blind to her faults in the presentation of last evening. She is, undoubtedly, a great actress, and last night evidenced a magnificent genius, more especially remarkable on account of her extreme youth; but whether she is a great JULIET is, indeed, more doubtful. We can imagine her as personating LADY MACBETH superbly, and hope soon to witness her in the part. As JULIET, her conception is almost perfect, as evinced by her rare and exceptional taste and intuitive understanding of the text. But her exactment of the earlier scenes lacks the exuberance and earnest joyfulness of the pure and glowing Flower of Italy, with all her fanciful conceits and delightful and loving ardour.

"We could not, in Miss Anderson's rendition of the balcony scene, help feeling in the tones of her voice, an almost stern foreboding of their saddening fates—a foreboding stranger than that which falls as a shadow to all ecstatic youthful hope and joy. Other faults—as evident, undoubtedly, to her and to her advisers, as to us—are for the most part superficial, and will disappear in a little further experience. A first appearance, coupled with so much merit and youth, may well excuse many things.

"A lack of true interpretation we can never excuse. We give mediocrity fair common-place words, generally of commendation unaccompanied by censure. But when we come to deal with a divine inspiration, our words must have their full meaning.

"We do not here want mere commendatory phrases, whose stereotyped faces appear again and again. We want just appreciation, just censure. Thus our criticism is not to be considered unkind. Nay, we not only owe it to the truth and to ourselves in Miss Anderson's case, to state the existence of faults and crudities in her acting, but we owe it to her, for it is the greatest kindness, and yet

we do not speak harshly and are glad to admit that most of her faults—such for instance as frequently casting up the eyes—are not only slight in themselves, but enhance if not caused by the timidity natural on such an occasion.

"But enough of faults. We know something of the quality of our home actress. We see with but little further training and experience she will stand among the foremost actresses on the stage. We are charmed by her beauty and commanding power, and are justified in predicting great future success."

In the following February Mary Anderson appeared again at Macaulay's Theatre for a week, when she played, with success, *Bianca* in "Phasio," studied by the advice of the manager, who thought she had a vocation for heavy tragedy; also *Julia* in "The Hunchback," *Evadne*, and again *Juliet*.

The reputation of the rising young actress began to spread now beyond the bounds of her Kentucky home, and on the 6th of March, 1876, she commenced a week's engagement at the Opera House in St. Louis. Old Ben de Bar, the great Falstaff of his time, was manager of this theatre. He had known all the most eminent American actors, and had been manager for many of the stars; and he was quick to discern the brilliant future which awaited the young actress. The St. Louis engagement was not altogether successful, though it was brightened by the praises of General Sherman, with whom was formed then a friendship which remains unbroken till to-day. Indeed, the old veteran can never pass Long Branch in his travels without "stopping off to see Mary." Ben de Bar had a theatre in New Orleans, known as the St. Charles. It was the Drury Lane of that city, and situated in an unfashionable quarter of the town. Its benches were reported to be almost deserted, and its treasury nearly empty. But an

engagement to appear there for a week was accepted joyfully by Mary Anderson. She played *Evadne* at a parting *matinée* in St. Louis on the Saturday, travelled to New Orleans all through Sunday, arriving there at two o'clock on the Monday afternoon, rushed down to the theatre to rehearse with a new company, and that night appeared to a house of only forty-eight dollars! The students of the Military College formed a large part of the scanty audience, and fired with the beauty and talent of the young actress, they sallied forth between the acts and bought up all the bouquets in the quarter. The final act of "Evadne" was played almost knee-deep in flowers, and that night Mary Anderson was compelled to hire a waggon to carry home to her hotel the floral offerings of her martial admirers. General and Mrs. Tom Thumb occupied the stage box on one of the early nights of the engagement, and the fame of the beautiful young star soon reached the fashionable quarter of New Orleans, and Upper Tendom flocked to the despised St. Charles. On the following Saturday night there was a house packed from floor to ceiling, the takings, meanwhile, having risen from 48 to 500 dollars. An offer of an engagement at the Variétés, the Lyceum of New Orleans, quickly followed, and the daring feat of appearing as *Meg Merrilies* was attempted on its boards. The press predicted failure, and warned the young aspirant against essaying a part almost identified with Cushman, then but lately deceased, who had been a great favourite with the New Orleans public, and one of whose best impersonations it was. The actors too, with whom Mary Anderson rehearsed, looked forward to anything but a success. Nothing daunted, however, and confident in her own powers, she spent two hours in

perfecting a make-up so successful, that even her mother failed to recognize her in the strange weird disguise; and, then darkening her dressing room, set herself resolutely to get into the heart of her part. Mary Anderson's *Meg Merrilies* was an immense success; Cushman herself never received greater applause, and the scene was quite an ovation. Hearing, on the fall of the curtain, that General Beauregard, one of the heroes of the Civil War, intended to make a presentation, she threw off her disguise, and smoothing her hair rushed back to the stage, to receive the Badge of the Washington Artillery, a belt enamelled in blue, with crossed cannons in gold with diamond vents, and suspended from the belt a tiger's head in gold, with diamond eyes and ruby tongue. The corps had been known through the War as the "Tiger Heads," and were famed for their deeds of daring and bravery. The belt bore the inscription "To Mary Anderson, from her friends of the Battalion." She returned thanks in a little speech which was received with much enthusiasm, and retired almost overcome with pleasure and pride. The youthful actress, who had then not completed her seventeenth year, took by storm the hearts of the impulsive and chivalrous Southerners. On the morning of her departure, she found to her astonishment that the railway company had placed a fine "Pullman" and special engine at her disposal all the way to Louisville. Generals Beauregard and Hood with many distinguished Southerners were on the platform to bid her farewell, and she returned home with purse and reputation both marvellously grown.

After a brief period spent in diligent study, Mary Anderson fulfilled a second engagement in New Orleans, which proved a

great financial success. The criticisms of this period all admit her histrionic power, though some describe her efforts as at times raw and crude, faults hardly to be wondered at in a young girl mainly self-taught, and with barely a year's experience of the business of the stage.

About this time Mary Anderson met with the first serious rebuff in her hitherto so successful career. It happened too in California, the State of her birth, where she was to have a somewhat rude experience of the old adage, that "a prophet has no honour in his own country." John McCullough was then managing with great success the principal theatre at San Francisco, and offered her a two weeks' engagement. But California would have none of her. The public were cold and unsympathetic, the press actually hostile. The critics declared not only that she could not act, but that she was devoid of all capability of improvement. One more gallant than his fellows was gracious enough to remark that, in spite of her mean capacity as an artist, she possessed a neck like a column of marble. It was only when she appeared as *Meg Merrilies* that the Californians thawed a little, and the press relented somewhat. Edwin Booth happened to be in San Francisco at the time, and it was on the stage of California that Mary Anderson first met the distinguished actor who had been her early stage ideal. He told her that for ten years he had never sat through a performance till hers; and the praises of the great tragedian went far to console for the coldness and want of sympathy in the general public. It was by Booth's advice, as well as John McCullough's, that she now began to study such parts as *Parthenia*, as better suited to her powers than more sombre tragedy. Those were the old stock-

theatre days in America, when every theatre had a fair standing company, and relied for its success on the judicious selection of stars. This system, though perhaps a somewhat vicious one, made so many engagements possible to Mary Anderson, whose means would not have admitted of the costlier system of travelling with a special company.

The return journey from California was made painfully memorable by a disastrous accident to a railway train which had preceded the party, and they were compelled to stop for the night at a little roadside town in Missouri. The hotels were full of wounded passengers, and scenes of distress were visible on all sides. When they were almost despairing of a night's lodging, a plain countryman approached them, and offered the hospitality of his pretty white cottage hard by, embosomed in its trees and flowers. The offer was thankfully accepted, and soon after their arrival the wife's sister, a "school mar'm," came in, and seemed to warm at once to her beautiful young visitor. She proposed a walk, and the two girls sallied forth into the fields. The stranger turned the subject to Shakespeare and the stage, with which Mary Anderson was fain to confess but a very slight acquaintance, fearing the announcement of her profession would shock the prejudices of these simple country folk, who might shrink from having "a play actress" under their roof. Some months after the party had returned home there came a letter from these kind people saying how, to their delight and astonishment, they had accidentally discovered who had been their guest. It seemed the sister was an enthusiastic Shakespearian student, and all agreed that in entertaining Mary Anderson they had "entertained an angel unawares.'

The Californian trip may be said to close the first period of Mary Anderson's dramatic career. With some drawbacks and some rebuffs she had made a great success, but she was known thus far only as a Western girl, who had yet to encounter the judgment of the more critical audiences of the South and East, as years later, with a reputation second to none all over the States as well as in Canada, she essayed, with a success which has been seldom equalled, perhaps never surpassed, the ordeal of facing, at the Lyceum, an audience, perhaps the most fastidious and critical in London.

Chapter IV.

THE CAREER OF AN AMERICAN STAR.

MARY ANDERSON returned home from California disheartened and dispirited. To her it had proved anything but a Golden State. Her visit there was the first serious rebuff in her brief dramatic career whose opening months had been so full of promise, and even of triumph. She was barely seventeen, and a spirit less brave, or less confident in its own powers, might easily have succumbed beneath the storm of adverse criticism. Happily for herself, and happily too for the stage on both sides of the Atlantic, the young *débutante* took the lesson wisely to heart. She saw that the heights of dramatic fame could not be taken by storm; that her past successes, if brilliant, regard being had to her youth and want of training, were far from secure. She was like some fair flower which had sprung up warmed by the genial sunshine, likely enough to wither and die before the first keen blast. Her youth, her beauty, her undoubted dramatic genius, were points strongly in her favour; but these could ill counterbalance, at first at any rate, the want of systematic training, the almost total absence of any experience of the representation by others of

the parts which she sought to make her own. She had seen Charlotte Cushman, indeed, in *Meg Merrilies*, but of the true rendering of a part so difficult and complex as Shakespeare's *Juliet*, she knew absolutely nothing but what she had been taught by the promptings of her own artistic instinct. She was herself the only *Juliet*, as she was the only *Bianca*, and the only *Evadne*, she had ever seen upon any stage. In those days she had, perhaps, never heard the remark of Mademoiselle Mars, who was the most charming of Juliets at sixty. "*Si j'avais ma jeunesse, je n'aurais pas mon talent.*"

Coming back then to her Kentucky home from the ill-starred Californian trip, Mary Anderson seems to have determined to essay again the lowest steps of the ladder of fame. She took a summer engagement with a company, which was little else than a band of strolling players. The *repertoire* was of the usual ambitious character, and Mary was able to assume once more her favourite *rôle* of *Juliet*. The company was deficient in a *Romeo*, and the part was consequently undertaken by a lady—a *rôle* by the way in which Cushman achieved one of her greatest triumphs. In spite, however, of the young star, the little band played to sadly empty houses, and the treasury was so depleted that, in the generosity of her heart, Mary Anderson proposed to organize a benefit *matinée*, and play *Juliet*. She went down to the theatre at the appointed hour and dressed for her part. After some delay a man strayed into the pit, then a couple of boys peeped over the rails of the gallery, and, at last, a lady entered the dress-circle. The disheartened manager was compelled at length to appear before the curtain and announce that, in consequence of the want of public

support, the performance could not take place. That day Mary Anderson walked home to her hotel through the quiet streets of the little Kentucky town—which shall be nameless—with a sort of miserable feeling at her heart, that the world had no soul for the great creations of Shakespeare's master-mind, which had so entranced her youthful fancy. It all seemed like a descent into some chill valley of darkness, after the sweet incense of praise, the perfume of flowers, and the crowded theatres which had been her earlier experiences. But the dark storm cloud was soon to pass over, and henceforth almost unbroken sunshine was to attend Mary Anderson's career. For her there was to be no heart-breaking period of mean obscurity, no years of dull unrequited toil. She burst as a star upon the theatrical world, and a star she has remained to this day, because, through all her successes, she never for a moment lost sight of the fact that she could only maintain her ground by patient study, and steady persistent hard work. Failures she had unquestionably. Her rendering of a part was often rough, often unfinished. Not uncommonly she was surpassed in knowledge of stage business by the most obscure member of the companies with whom she played; but the public recognized instinctively the true light of genius which shone clear and bright through all defects and all shortcomings. It was a rare experience, whether on the stage, or in other paths of art, but not an unknown one. Fanny Kemble, who made her *début* at Covent Garden at the same age as Mary Anderson, took the town by storm at once, and seemed to burst upon the stage as a finished actress. David Garrick was the greatest actor in England after he had been on the boards less than three months Shelley was little more than sixteen

when he wrote "Queen Mab;" and Beckford's "Vathek" was the production of a youth of barely twenty.

In the year 1876 Mary Anderson received an offer from a distinguished theatrical manager, John T. Ford, of Washington and Baltimore, to join his company as a star, but at an ordinary salary. Three hundred dollars a week, even in those early days, was small pay for the rising young actress, who was already without a rival in her own line on the American stage; but the extended tour through the States which the engagement offered, the security of a good company, and of able management, led to an immediate acceptance. On this as on every other occasion, through her theatrical career, Mary Anderson was accompanied by her father and mother, who have ever watched over her welfare with the tenderest solicitude. All the arrangements for the trip were *en prince*. Indeed we have small idea in our little sea-girt isle, of the luxury and even splendour with which American stars travel over the vast distances between one city and another on the immense Western continent. The "City of Worcester," a new Pullman car, subsequently used by Sarah Bernhardt, and afterwards by Edwin Booth, was chartered for the party, consisting of Mary Anderson, her father, mother, and brother, and the young actress's maid and secretary. A cook and three coloured porters constituted the *personnel* of the establishment. There was a completely equipped kitchen, a dining-room with commodious family table; a tiny drawing-room with its piano, portraits of favourite artists, and some choicely-filled bookshelves, as well as capital sleeping quarters. It was literally a splendid home upon wheels. Where the hotels

happened to be inferior at any particular town, the party occupied it through the period of the engagement. Visitors were received, friendly parties arranged, and little of the inconvenience and discomfort of travel experienced. It was thus that Mary Anderson made her first great theatrical tour through the States. In spite of now and then a cold, or even hostile press, her progress was very like a triumph. In many places she created an absolute *furore*, hundreds being turned away at the theatre doors. Indeed, it was no uncommon occurrence for an ordinary seat whose advertised price was 75 cents to sell at as high a premium as 25 dollars. The management reaped a rich harvest, and Mary Anderson played on this Southern trip to more money than any previous actor, excepting only Edwin Forrest. There was still one drop of bitter in this cup of sweetness and success. The company, jealous of the prominence given to one whom they regarded as a mere untried girl, proceeded to add what they could to her difficulties by "boycotting" her. There were two exceptions among the gentlemen actors; and we are pleased to be able to record that one of these was an Englishman. The ladies were unanimous in proclaiming a war to the knife!

Needless to say the impassioned youth of the New World now and then pursued the wandering star in her travels at immense expenditure of time and money, as well as of floral decorations. This is young America's way of showing his admiration for a favourite actress. He is silent and unobtrusive. He makes his presence known by the midnight serenade beneath her windows; by the bouquets which fall at her feet on every representation, and are sent to the room of her hotel at

the same hour each day; by his constant attendance on the departure platform at the railway station. We are not sure that this silent worship which so often persistently followed her path was displeasing to Mary Anderson. It touched, if not her heart, yet that poetic vein which runs through her nature, and reminded her sometimes of the vain pursuit with which Evangeline followed her wandering lover.

Manager Ford had taken Mary Anderson through the South with great profit to himself. In this she had had no direct pecuniary interest beyond her modest salary. She had, of course, greatly enriched her reputation if not her purse. She had become at home in her parts, and even added to her *repertoire*, the manager's daughter, with whom she played *Juliet* and *Lady Macbeth* alternately, having translated for her *La fille de Roland*, in which she has since appeared with great success. She was then but seventeen-and-a-half, and had never possessed a diamond, when on returning home from church one Sunday morning, she found a little jewel-case containing a magnificent diamond cross, an acknowledgment from the manager of her services to his company. The gift was the more appreciated from the fact that it was a very exceptional specimen of managerial generosity in America!

The criticisms of the press during the early years of Mary Anderson's theatrical career are full of interest, viewed in the light of her after and firmly-established success. They show that the American people were not slow to recognize the genius of the young girl, who was destined hereafter to spread a lustre on the stage of two Continents. At the same time they are full either of a ridiculous praise which is blind to the presence of the least

fault, and would have turned the head of a young girl not endowed with the sturdy common sense possessed by Mary Anderson; or they are marked by a vindictive animosity which defeats its very object, and practically attracts public notice in favour of an actress it is obviously meant to crush. These newspaper criticisms are further amusing as showing the family likeness which exists between the *genus* "dramatic critic" on both sides of the Atlantic. Each seems to believe that he carries the fate of the actor in his inkhorn. Each seems blind to the fact that *Vox populi vox Dei;* that favourable criticism never yet made an artist, who had not within him the power to win the popular favour; still more, that adverse criticism can never extinguish the heaven-sent spark of true artistic fire.

The verdict of Louisville on its home-grown actress has been given in a preceding chapter. The estimate, however, of strangers is of far more value than that of friends or acquaintance. The judgment of St. Louis, where Mary Anderson played her earliest engagements away from home is, on the whole, the most interesting dramatic criticism of her early performances on record. St. Louis is a city of considerable culture, and stands in much the same relation to the South, as does its modern rival Chicago to the North-West. Its newspapers are some of the ablest on the Continent, and its audiences perhaps as critical as any in America if we except perhaps such places as Boston or New York.

The St. Louis Globe Democrat says:—

"A diamond in the rough, but yet a diamond, was the mental verdict of the jury who sat in the Opera House last night to see Miss Mary Anderson on her first appearance here in the character

of *Juliet*. It was in reality her *début* upon the stage. She played, a short time since, for one week in her native city, Louisville, but this is her first effort upon a stage away from the associations which surround an appearance among friends, and which must, to a great extent, influence the general judgment of the *débutante's* merit . . . . . We believe her to be the most promising young actress who has stepped upon the boards for many a day, and before whom there is, undoubtedly, a brilliant and successful career."

The St. Louis Republican has the following very interesting notice:—

"A fresh and beautiful young girl of Juliet's age embodied and presented *Juliet*. Beauty often mirrors its type in this beautiful character, but very rarely does Juliet's youth meet its youthful counterpart on the stage . . . . A great *Juliet* is not the question here, but the possibility of a Juliet near the age at which the dramatist presented his heroine. Mary Anderson is untampered by any stage traditions, and she rendered Shakespeare's youngest heroine as she felt her pulsing in his lines . . . . She leads a return to the source of poetic inspiration, and exemplifies what true artistic instincts and feeling can do on the stage, without either the traditions and experience of acting. She colours her own conceptions and figure of Juliet, and by her work vindicates the master, and proves that Juliet can be presented by a girl of her own age . . . . The fourth act exhibited great tragic power, and no want was felt in the celebrated chamber scene which is the test passage of this *rôle* . . . . It stamped the performance as a success, and the actress as a phenomenon . . . . The thought must have gone round the house among those who knew the facts—Can this be only the seventh performance on the stage of this young girl?"

Here is another notice a few months later on in Mary Anderson's dramatic career from the "*Baltimore Gazette*":—

"Miss Anderson's 'Juliet' has the charm which belongs to youth, beauty, and natural genius. Her fair face, her flexile youth—

for she is still in her teens—and her great natural dramatic genius, make her personation of that sweet creation of Shakespeare successful, in spite of her immaturity as an artist. We have so often seen aged Juliets; stiff, stagey Juliets; fat, roomy Juliets; and ill-featured Juliets, that the sight of a young, lady-like girl, with natural dramatic genius, a bright face, an unworn voice is truly refreshing. In the scene where the nurse brings her the bad news of Tybalt's death and Romeo's banishment, she acted charmingly. In gesture, attitude, and facial expression, she gave evidence of emotion so true and strong, as showed she was capable of losing her own identity in the *rôle*."

As an amusing specimen of vindictive criticism, we subjoin a notice in the *Washington Capitol*, under date May 28, 1876. This lengthy notice contains strong internal evidence of a deadly feud existing between Manager Ford and the Editor of *The Capitol*, and the stab is given through the fair bosom of Mary Anderson, whose immense success in Senatorial Washington, this atrabilious knight of the plume devotes two columns of his valuable space to explaining away.

Washington City *Daily Capitol*, 28th May, 1876.

"Miss Anderson comes to us on a perfect whirlwind of newspaper puffs. We use the words advisedly, for in none of them can be found a paragraph of criticism. If Siddons or Cushman had been materialized and restored to the stage in all their pristine excellence, the excitement in Cincinnati, Louisville, St. Louis and New Orleans, could not have been more intense. The very firemen of one of those cities seem to have been aroused and lost their hearts, if not their heads, and not only serenaded the object of their adoration, but got up a decoration for her to wear of the most costly and gorgeous sort. Under this state of fact we waited with unusual impatience for the sixteen sticks to give the cue that was to fetch on the Juliet. It came at last, and Juliet stalked in. Had Lady Macbeth responded

to the summons we could not have been more amazed. Miss Anderson is heroic in size and manner. The lovely heiress to the house of the Capulets, on the turn of sixteen, swept in upon the stage as if she were mistress of the house, situation, and of fate, and bent on bringing the enemy to terms. Her face is sweet, at times positively beautiful, but incapable of expression. Her voice, while clear, is hard, metallic, at intervals nasal, and all the while stagey. She has been trained in the old Kemble tragic pump-handle style of elocution, that runs talk on stilts. Her manner is crude and awkward. In the balcony scene she only needed a pair of gold rimmed glasses to have made her an excellent schoolmistress, chiding a naughty young man for intruding upon the sacred premises of Madame Fevialli's select academy for young ladies. In the love scenes that followed she was cold enough to be broken to pieces for a refrigerator. But who could have warmed up to such a Romeo? That unpleasant youth pained us with his quite unnecessary gyrations and spasmodic noise. We soon discovered that Miss Anderson had been coached for Juliet without possessing on her part the most distant conception of the character—or capacity to render it, had she the information. She was not doing Juliet from end to end. She was as far from Juliet as the North Pole is from the Equator. She was doing something else. We could not make out clearly what that character was; but it was something quite different and a good way off. Sometimes we thought it was Lady Macbeth, sometimes Meg Merrilies, sometimes Lucretia Borgia, but never for a moment Juliet. We speak thus plainly of Miss Anderson, because her injudicious and enthusiastic friends are injuring, if they are not ruining her. Her fine physique, her dash, her beautiful face, her clear ringing voice, have carried crowds off their heads—well, they are off at both ends; for on last Thursday night the amount of applauding was based on shoe leather. The lovely Anderson was called out at the end of each act. As to that, the active Romeo had his call. We never saw before precisely such a house. The north-west was out in full force. Kentucky came to the front like a little man. General Sherman, sitting at our elbow, wore out his gloves, blistered his hands, and then borrowed a

cotton umbrella from his neighbour. Miss Anderson, with all her natural advantages, added to her love of the art, her indomitable will as shown in her square prominent jaw, has a career before her, but it is not down the path indicated by these enthusiastic friends. 'The steeps where Fame's proud temple shines afar' are difficult of access, and genius waters them with more tears than sturdy, steady, persevering talent.

"Charlotte Cushman told us once that the heaviest article she had to carry up was her heart. The divine actress who now leads the English-spoken stage began her professional career as a ballet dancer, and has grown her laurels from her tears. We suspected Miss Anderson's success. It was too triumphant, too easy. After years of weary labour, of heart-breaking disappointments, of dreary obscurity, genius sometimes blazes out for a brief period to dazzle humanity; and quite as often never blazes, but disappears without a triumph.

"To such life is not a battle, but a campaign with ten defeats, yea, twenty defeats to one victory.

"Miss Anderson will think us harsh and unkind in this. She will live, we hope, to consider us her best friend.

"There is one fact upon which she can comfort herself: she could not get two hours and a-half of our time and a column in THE CAPITOL were she without merit. There is value in her; but to fetch it out she must go back, begin lower, and give years to training, education, and hard work. She can labour ten years for the sake of living five. As for her support, it was of the sort afforded by John T., the showman, and very funny. Mrs. Germon, God bless her! was properly funny. She is the best old woman on end in the world.

"Romeo (Mr. Morton) we have spoken of. Lingham is supposed to have done Mercutio. Well, he did do him. That is, he went through the motions. He seemed to be saying something anent the great case of Capulet *v.* Montague, but so indistinct that there was a general sense of relief when he staggered off to die. Deaths generally had this effect Thursday night, and the house not only applauded the exits, but made itself exceedingly merry.

"When Paris went down and a tombstone fell over him, his plaintive cry of 'Oh, I am killed!' was received with shouts of laughter.

"It was the most laughable we ever witnessed. In the first scene one of those marble statues, so peculiar to John T.'s mismanagement, that resemble granite in a bad state of small-pox, fell over.

"The house was amazed to see it resolve itself into a board, and laughed tumultuously to note how it righted itself up in a mysterious manner, and stood in an easy reclining posture till the curtain fell.

"The scene that exhibited the balcony affair was a sweet thing. Evidently the noble house of the Capulets was in reduced circumstances. The building from which Juliet issued was a frame structure so frail in material that we feared a collapse.

"If the carpenter who erected that structure for the Capulets charged more than ten dollars currency he swindled the noble old duffer infamously. The front elevation came under that order of architecture known out West as Conestoga. It was all of fifteen feet in height, and depended for ornamentation on a brilliant horse cover thrown over the corner of the balcony, and a slop bucket that Juliet was evidently about to empty on the head of Romeo when that youth made his presence known. The house shook so under Juliet's substantial tread, that an old lady near us wished to be taken out, declaring that 'that young female would get her neck broken next thing.'

"In the last scene where the page (Miss Lulu Dickson) was ordered to extinguish the torch, the poor girl made frantic efforts, but failing walked off with the thing blazing.

"When Paris entered with his page, a youth in a night shirt, that youth carried in his countenance the fixed determination of putting out his torch at the right moment or die in the attempt. We all saw that.

"Expectancy was worked up to a point of intense interest, so that when at last the word was given, a puff of wind not only

extinguished the torch but shook the scenery, and made us thankful the young man did wear pantaloons, as the consequences might have been terrible.

"When Count Paris fell mortally wounded, a tombstone at his side fell over him in the most convenient and charming manner. The house was so convulsed with merriment that when poor Juliet was exposed in the tomb she was greeted with laughter, much to the poor girl's embarrassment. And this is the sort of entertainment to which we have been treated throughout our entire season. But then the showman is a success and pays his bills."

The great Eastern cities of America are regarded by an American artist much in the same light as is the metropolis by a provincial artist at home. Their approval is supposed to stamp as genuine the verdict of remoter districts. The success which had attended Mary Anderson in her journeyings West and South was not to desert her when she presented herself before the presumably more critical audiences of the East. She made her Eastern *début* at Pittsburg, the Birmingham of America, in the heat of the Presidential Election of 1880, and met with a thoroughly enthusiastic reception, to proceed thence to Philadelphia where she reaped plenty of honour, but very little money. Boston, the Athens of the New World, was reached at length. When Mary Anderson was taken down by the manager to see the vast Boston Theatre, whose auditorium seats 4,000 people, and which Henry Irving declared to be the finest in the world, she almost fainted with apprehension. She opened here in *Evadne*, and one journal predicted that she would take Cushman's place. This part was followed by *Juliet*, *Meg Merrilies*, and her other chief impersonations. On one day of her engagement the receipts at a *matinée*

and an evening performance amounted together to the large sum of $7,000.

The visit to Boston was made memorable to Mary Anderson by her introduction to Longfellow. About a week after she had opened, a friend of the poet's came to her with a request that she would pay him a visit at his pretty house in the suburbs of Boston, Longfellow being indisposed at the time, and confined to his quaint old study, overlooking the waters of the sluggish Charles, and the scenery made immortal in his verse. Here was commenced a warm friendship between the beautiful young artist and the aged poet, which continued unbroken to the day of his death. He was seated when she entered in a richly-carved chair, of which Longfellow told her this charming story. The "spreading chestnut tree," immortalized in "The Village Blacksmith," happened to stand in an outlying village near Boston, somewhat inconveniently for the public traffic at some cross roads. It became necessary to cut it down, and remove the forge beneath. But the village fathers did not venture to proceed to an act which they regarded as something like sacrilege, without consulting Longfellow. At their request he paid a visit of farewell to the spot, and sanctioned what was proposed. Not long after, a handsomely carved chair was forwarded to him, made from the wood of the "spreading chestnut tree," and which bore an inscription commemorative of the circumstances under which it was given. Few of his possessions were dearer to Longfellow than this dumb memento how deeply his poetry had sunk into the national heart of his countrymen. It stood in the chimney corner of his study, and till the day of his death was always his favourite seat.

The verdict of Longfellow upon Mary Anderson is worth that of a legion of newspaper critics, and his judgment of her *Juliet*, deserves to be recorded in letters of gold. The morning after her benefit, he said to her, "I have been thinking of Juliet all night. *Last night you were Juliet!*"

At the Boston Theatre occurred an accident which shows the marvellous courage and power of endurance possessed by the young actress. In the play of *Meg Merrilies*, she had to appear suddenly in one scene at the top of a cliff some fifteen feet above the stage. To avoid the danger of falling over, it was necessary to use a staff. Mary Anderson had managed to find one of Cushman's, but the point having become smooth through use, she told one of the people of the theatre to put a small nail at the bottom. Instead of this, he affixed a good-sized spike, and one night Mary Anderson, coming out as usual, drove this right through her foot, in her sudden stop on the cliff's brink. Without flinching, or moving a muscle, with Spartan fortitude she played the scene to the end, though almost fainting with pain, till on the fall of the curtain the spiked staff was drawn out, not without force. Longfellow was much concerned at this accident, and on nights she did not play would sit by her side in her box, and wrap the furred over-coat he used to wear carefully round her wounded foot.

From Boston Mary Anderson proceeded to New York to fulfil a two weeks' engagement at the Fifth Avenue Theatre. She opened with a good company in "The Lady of Lyons." General Sherman had advised her to read no papers, but one morning to her great encouragement, some good friend thrust under her door

a very favourable notice in the *New York Herald.* The engagement proved a great success, and was ultimately extended to six weeks, the actress playing two new parts, *Juliet* and *The Daughter of Roland.* She had passed the last ordeal successfully, and might rejoice as she stood on the crest of the hill of Fame that the ambition of her young life was at length realized. Her subsequent theatrical career in the States and Canada need not be recorded here. She had become America's representative *tragédienne;* there was none to dispute her claims. Year after year she continued to increase an already brilliant reputation, and to amass one of the largest fortunes it has ever been the happy lot of any artist to secure.

Chapter V.

FIRST VISIT TO EUROPE.

IN the summer of 1879, was paid Mary Anderson's first visit to Europe. It had long been eagerly anticipated. In the lands of the Old World was the cradle of the Art she loved so well, and it was with feelings almost of awe that she entered their portals. She had few if any introductions, and spent a month in London wandering curiously through the conventional scenes usually visited by a stranger. Westminster Abbey was among her favourite haunts; its ancient aisles, its storied windows, its thousand memories of a past which antedated by so many centuries the civilization of her native land, appealed deeply to the ardent imagination of the impassioned girl. Here was a world of which she had read and dreamed, but whose over-mastering, living influence was now for the first time felt. It seemed like the first glimpse of verdant forest, of enamelled meadow, of crystal stream, of pure sky to one who had been blind. It was another atmosphere, another life. Brief as was her visit, it gave an impulse to those germs which lie deep in every poetic soul. She saw there was an illimitable world of Art, whose threshold as

yet she had hardly trodden—and she went home full of the inspiration caught at the ancient fountains of Poetry and Art. From that time an intellectual change seems to have passed over her. Her studies took new channels, and her impersonations were mellowed and glorified from her personal contact with the associations of a great Past.

A visit to Stratford-on-Avon was one of the most delightful events of the trip. It seemed to Mary Anderson the emblem of peace and contentment and quiet; and though as a stranger she did not then enjoy so many of the privileges which were willingly accorded her during the present visit to this country, she still looks back to the day when she knelt by the grave of Shakespeare as one of the most eventful and inspiring of her life.

Much of the time of Mary Anderson's European visit was spent in Paris. Through the kindness of General Sherman she obtained introductions to Ristori and other distinguished artists, and, to her delight, secured also the *entrée* behind the scenes of the *Théâtre Français*. Its magnificent green-room, the walls lined with portraits of departed celebrities of that famous theatre, amazed her by its splendour; and to her it was a strange and curious sight to see the actors in *Hernani* come in and play cards in their gorgeous stage costumes at intervals in the performance. On one of these occasions she naïvely asked Sarah Bernhardt why her portrait did not appear on the walls? The great artist replied that she hoped Mary Anderson did not wish her dead, as only under such circumstances could an appearance there be permitted to her. "Behind the Scenes" of the *Théâtre Français* was a source of never-wearying interest, and Mary Anderson

thought the effects of light attained there far surpassed anything she had witnessed on the English or American stage.

The verdict of Ristori, before whom she recited, was highly favourable, and the great *tragédienne* predicted a brilliant career for the young actress, and declared she would be a great success with an English company in Paris, while the "divine Sarah" affirmed that she had never seen greater originality. On the return journey from Paris a brief stay was made at the quaint city of Rouen. Joan of Arc's stake, and the house where, tradition has it, she resided, were sacred spots to Mary Anderson; and the ancient towers, the curious old streets, overlooking the fertile valley through which the Seine wanders like a silver thread, are memories which have since remained to her evergreen. During her first visit to England Mary Anderson never dreamt of the possibility that she herself might appear on the English stage. Indeed the effect of her first European tour was depressing and disheartening. She saw only how much there was for her to see, how much to learn in the world of Art. A feeling of home-sickness came over her, and she longed to be back at her sea-side home where she could watch the wild restless Atlantic as it swept in upon the New Jersey shore, and listen to the sad music of the weary waves. This was the instinct of a true artist nature, which had depths capable of being stirred by the touch of what is great and noble.

In the following year, however, there came an offer from the manager of Drury Lane to appear upon its boards. Mary Anderson received it with a pleased surprize. It told that her name had spread beyond her native land, and that thus early had been

earned a reputation which commended her as worthy to appear on the stage of a great and famous London theatre. But her reply was a refusal. She thought herself hardly finished enough to face such a test of her powers; and the natural ambition of a successful actress to extend the area of her triumph seemed to have found no place in her heart.

Chapter VI.

SECOND VISIT TO EUROPE. EXPERIENCES ON THE ENGLISH STAGE.

THE interval of five years which elapsed between Mary Anderson's first and second visits to Europe was busily occupied by starring tours in the States and Canada. Mr. Henry Abbey's first proposal, in 1883, for an engagement at the Lyceum was met with the same negative which had been given to that of Mr. Augustus Harris. But, happening some time afterwards to meet her step-father, Dr. Griffin, in Baltimore, Mr. Abbey again urged his offer, to which a somewhat reluctant consent was at length given. The most ambitious moment of her artist-life seemed to have arrived at last. If she attained success, the crown was set on all the previous triumphs of her art; if failure were the issue, she would return to America discredited, if not disgraced, as an actress. The very crisis of her stage-life had come now in earnest. It found her despondent, almost despairing; at the last moment she was ready to draw back. She had then none of the many friends who afterwards welcomed her with heartfelt

sincerity whenever the curtain rose on her performance. She saw Irving in *Louis XI.* and *Shylock*. The brilliant powers of the great actor filled her at once with admiration and with dread, when she remembered how soon she too must face the same audiences. She sought to distract herself by making a round of the London theatres, but the most amusing of farces could hardly draw from her a passing smile, or lift for a moment the weight of apprehension which pressed on her heart. The very play in which she was destined first to present herself before a London audience was condemned beforehand. To make a *début* as *Parthenia* was to court certain failure. The very actors who rehearsed with her were Job's comforters. She saw in their faces a dreary vista of empty houses, of hostile critics, of general disaster. She almost broke down under the trial, and the sight of her first play-bill which told that the die was irrevocably cast for good or evil made her heart sink with fear. On going down to the theatre upon the opening night she found, with mingled pleasure and surprise, that on both sides of the Atlantic fellow artists were regarding her with kindly sympathizing hearts. Her dressing-room was filled with beautiful floral offerings from many distinguished actors in England and America, while telegrams from Booth, McCullough, Lawrence Barrett, Irving, Ellen Terry, Christine Nillson, and Lillie Langtry, bade her be of good courage, and wished her success. The overture smote like a dirge on her ear, and when the callboy came to announce that the moment of her entrance was at hand, it reminded her of nothing so much as the feeling of mourners when the sable mute appears at the door, as a signal to form the procession to the tomb. But in a moment the ordeal was

safely passed, and passed for ever so far as an English audience is concerned. Seldom has any actress received so warm and enthusiastic a reception. Mary Anderson confesses now that never till that moment did she experience anything so generous and so sympathetic, and offered to one who was then but "a stranger in a strange land." Mary Anderson's *Parthenia* was a brilliant success. Her glorious youth, her strange beauty, her admirable impersonation of a part of exceptional difficulty, won their way to all hearts. A certain amount of nervousness and timidity was inevitable to a first performance. The sudden revulsion of feeling, from deep despondency to complete triumphant success, made it difficult, at times, for the actress to master her feelings sufficiently to make her words audible through the house. One candid youth in the gallery endeavoured to encourage her with a kindly "Speak up, Mary." The words recalled her in an instant to herself, and for the rest of the evening she had regained all her wonted self-possession.

From that time till Mary Anderson's first Lyceum season closed, the world of London flocked to see her. The house was packed nightly from floor to ceiling, and she is said to have played to more money than the distinguished lessee of the theatre himself. Among the visitors with whom Mary Anderson was a special favourite were the Prince and Princess. They witnessed each of her performances more than once, and both did her the honour to make her personal acquaintance, and compliment her on her success. So many absurd stories have been circulated as to Mary Anderson's alleged unwillingness to meet the Prince of Wales, that the true story may as well be told

once for all here. On one of the early performances of *Ingomar*, the Prince and Princess occupied the Royal box, and the Prince caused it to be intimated to Mary Anderson that he should be glad to be introduced to her after the third act. The little republican naïvely responded that she never saw anyone till after the close of the performance. H.R.H. promptly rejoined that he always left the theatre immediately the curtain fell. Meanwhile the manager represented to her the ungraciousness of not complying with a request which half the actresses in London would have sacrificed their diamonds to receive. And so at the close of the third act, Mary Anderson presented herself, leaning on her father's arm, in the ante-room of the Royal box. Only the Prince was there, and "He said to me," relates Mary Anderson, "more charming things than were ever said to me, in a few minutes, in all my life. I was delighted with his kindness, and with his simple pleasant manner which put me at my ease in a moment; but I was rather surprised that the Princess did not see me as well." The piece over, and there came a second message, that the Princess also wished to be introduced. With her winning smile she took Mary Anderson's hand in hers, and thanking her for the pleasure she had afforded by her charming impersonation, graciously presented Mary with her own bouquet.

The true version of another story, this time as to the Princess of Wales and Mary Anderson, may as well now be given. One evening Count Gleichen happened to be dining *tête-à-tête* with the Prince and Princess at Marlborough House. When they adjourned to the drawing-room, the Princess showed the Count some photographs of a young lady, remarking upon her singular

beauty, and suggesting what a charming subject she would make for his chisel. The Count was fain to confess that he did not even know who the lady was, and had to be informed that she was the new American actress, beautiful Mary Anderson. He expressed the pleasure it would give him to have so charming a model in his studio, and asked the Princess whether he was at liberty to tell Mary Anderson that the suggestion came from her, to which the Princess replied that he certainly might do so. Three replicas of the bust will be executed, of which Count Gleichen intends to present one to her Royal Highness, another to Mary Anderson's mother, while the third will be placed in the Grosvenor Gallery. This is really all the foundation for the story of a Royal command to Count Gleichen to execute a bust of Mary Anderson for the Princess of Wales.

Among those who were constant visitors at the Lyceum was Lord Lytton, or as Mary Anderson loves to call him, "Owen Meredith." Her representation of his father's heroine in *The Lady of Lyons* naturally interested him greatly, and it is possible that he may himself write for her a special play. Between them there soon sprung up one of those warm friendships often seen between two artist natures, and Lord Lytton paid Mary Anderson the compliment of lending her an unpublished manuscript play of his father's to read. Tennyson, too, sought the acquaintance of one who in his verse would make a charming picture. He was invited to meet her at dinner at a London house, and was her cavalier on the occasion. The author of *The Princess* did not in truth succeed in supplanting in her regard the bard of her native land, Longfellow; but he so won on

Mary's heart that she afterwards presented him with the gift—somewhat unpoetic it must be admitted—of a bottle of priceless Kentucky whisky, of a fabulous age!

If Mary Anderson was a favourite with the public before the curtain, she was no less popular with her fellow artists on the stage. Jealousy and ill-will not seldom reign among the surroundings of a star. It is a trial to human nature to be but a lesser light revolving round some brilliant luminary—but the setting to adorn the jewel. But Mary Anderson won the hearts of every one on the boards, from actors to scene-shifters. And at Christmas, in which she is a great believer, every one, high or low, connected with the Lyceum was presented with some kind and thoughtful mark of her remembrance. And when the season closed, she was presented in turn, on the stage, with a beautiful diamond suite, the gift of the fellow artists who had shared for so long her triumphs and her toils.

Mary Anderson's success in London was fully endorsed by the verdict of the great provincial towns. Everywhere she was received with enthusiasm, and hundreds were nightly turned from the doors of the theatres where she appeared. In Edinburgh she played one night to a house of £450, a larger sum than was ever taken at the doors of the Lyceum. The receipts of the week in Manchester were larger than those of any preceding week in the theatrical history of the great northern town. Taken as a whole, her success has been without a parallel on the English stage. If she has not altogether escaped hostile criticism in the press, she has won the sympathies of the public in a way which no artist of other than English birth has succeeded in doing

before her. They have come and gone, dazzled us for a time, but have left behind them no endearing remembrance. Mary Anderson has found her way to our hearts. It seems almost impossible that she can ever leave us to resume again the old life of a wandering star across the great American Continent. It may be rash to venture a prophesy as to what the future may bring forth; but thus much we may say with truth, that, whenever Mary Anderson departs finally from our shores, the name of England will remain graven on her heart.

Chapter VII.

IMPRESSIONS OF ENGLAND.

ALMOST every traveller from either side of the Atlantic with the faintest pretensions to distinction, bursts forth on his return to his native shores in a volume of "Impressions." Archæologists and philosophers, novelists and divines, apostles of sweetness and light, and star actors, are accustomed thus to favour the public with volumes which the public could very often be well content to spare. It is but natural that we should wish to know what Mary Anderson thinks of the "fast-anchored isle" and the folk who dwell therein. I wish, indeed, that these "Impressions" could have been given in her own words. The work would have been much better done, and far more interesting; but failing this, I must endeavour, following a recent illustrious example, to give them at second hand. During the earlier months of her stay among us, she lived somewhat the life of a recluse. Shut up in a pretty villa under the shadow of the Hampstead Hills, she saw little society but that of a few fellow artists, who found their way to her on Sunday afternoons. Indeed, she almost shrank from the idea of entering general society. The English world she

wished to know was a world of the past, peopled by the creations of genius; not the modern world, which crowds London drawing-rooms. She saw the English people from the stage, and they were to her little more than audiences which vanished from her life when the curtain descended. From her earliest years she had been, in common with many of her countrymen, a passionate admirer of the great English novelist, Dickens. Much of her leisure was spent in pilgrimages to the spots round London which he has made immortal. Now and then, with her brother for a protector, she would go to lunch at an ancient hostelry in the Borough, where one of the scenes of Dickens's stories is laid, but which has degenerated now almost to the rank of a public-house. Here she would try to people the place in fancy with the characters of the novel. "To listen to the talk of the people at such places," she once said to me, "was better than any play I ever saw."

Stratford-on-Avon too, was, of course, revisited, and many days were spent in lingering lovingly over the memorials of her favourite Shakespeare. She soon became well known to the guardians of the spot, and many privileges were granted to her not accorded on her first visit, four years before, when she was regarded but as a unit in the crowd of passing visitors who throng to the shrine of the great master of English dramatic art. On one occasion when she was in the Church of Stratford-on-Avon, the ancient clerk asked her if she would mind being locked in while he went home to his tea. Nothing loth she consented, and remained shut up in the still solemnity of the place. Kneeling down by the grave of Shakespeare she took out a pocket *Romeo and Juliet* and recited Juliet's death scene close to the spot where the

great master, who created her, lay in his long sleep. But presently the wind rose to a storm, the branches of the surrounding trees dashed against the windows, darkness spread through the ghostly aisles, and terror-stricken, Mary fled to the door, glad enough to be released by the returning janitor.

Rural England with its moss-grown farmhouses, its grey steeples, its white cottages clustering under their shadow, its tiny fields, its green hedgerows, garrisoned by the mighty elms, charmed Mary Anderson beyond expression, contrasting so strongly with the vast prairies, the primeval forests, the mighty rivers of her own giant land. These were the boundaries of her horizon in the earlier months of her stay among us; she knew little but the England of the past, and the England as the stranger sees it, who passes on his travels through its smiling landscapes. But a change of residence to Kensington brought Mary Anderson more within reach of those whom she had so charmed upon the stage, and who longed to have the opportunity of knowing her personally. By degrees her drawing-rooms became the scene of an informal Sunday afternoon reception. Artists and novelists, poets and sculptors, statesmen and divines, journalists and people of fashion crowded to see her, and came away wondering at the skill and power with which this young girl, evidently fresh to society, could hold her own, and converse fluently and intelligently on almost any subject. If the verdict of London society was that Mary Anderson was as clever in the drawing-room, as she was attractive on the stage, she, in her turn, was charmed to speak face to face with many whose names and whose works had long been familar to her. It was a new world of art and intellect and genius to which she was

suddenly introduced, and which seemed to her all the more brilliant after the somewhat prosaic uniformity of society in her own republican land. To say that she admires and loves England with all her heart may be safely asserted. To say that it has almost succeeded in stealing away her heart from the land of her birth, she would hardly like to hear said. But we think her mind is somewhat that of Captain Macheath, in the Beggars' Opera—

> "How happy could I be with either,
> Were t'other dear charmer away!"

One superiority, at least, she confesses England to have over America. The dreadful "interviewer" who has haunted her steps for the last eight years of her life with a dogged pertinacity which would take no denial, was here nowhere to be seen. He exists we know, but she failed to recognize the same *genus* in the quite harmless-looking gentleman, who, occasionally on the stage after a performance, or in her drawing room, engaged her in conversation, when leading questions were skilfully disguised; and, then, much to her astonishment, afterwards produced a picture of her in print with materials she was quite unconscious of having furnished. She failed, she admits now, to see the conventional "note-book," so symbolical of the calling at home, and thus her fears and suspicions were disarmed.

One instance of Mary Anderson's kind and womanly sympathy to some of the poorest of London's waifs and strays should not be unrecorded here. It was represented to her at Christmas time that funds were needed for a dinner to a number of poor boys in Seven Dials. She willingly found them, and a good old-fashioned English dinner was given, at her expense, in

the Board School Room to some three hundred hungry little fellows, who crowded through the snow of the wintry New Year's Day to its hospitable roof. Though she is not of our faith, Mary Anderson was true to the precepts of that Christian Charity which, at such seasons, knows no distinction of creed; and of all the kind acts which she has done quietly and unostentatiously since she came among us, this is one which commends her perhaps most of all to our affection and regard.

Chapter VIII.

THE VERDICT OF THE CRITICS.

"Quot homines, tot sententiæ."

IT may, perhaps, be interesting to record here some of the criticisms which have appeared in several of the leading London and provincial journals on Mary Anderson's performances, and especially on her *début* at the Lyceum. Such notices are forgotten almost as soon as read, and except for some biographical purpose like the present, lie buried in the files of a newspaper office. It is usual to intersperse them with the text; but for the purpose of more convenient reference they have been included in a separate chapter.

Standard, 3rd September, 1883.

"The opening of the Lyceum, on Saturday evening, was signalized by the assembly of a crowded and fashionable audience to witness the first appearance in this country of Miss Mary Anderson as *Parthenia* in Maria Lovell's four-act play of 'Ingomar.' Though young in years, Miss Anderson is evidently a practised actress. She knows the business of the stage perfectly, is learned in the art

of making points, and, what is more, knows how to bide her opportunity. The wise discretion which imposes restraint upon the performer was somewhat too rigidly observed in the earlier scenes on Saturday night, the consequence being that in one of the most impressive passages of the not very inspired dialogue, the little distance between the sublime and the ridiculous was bridged by a voice from the gallery, which, adopting a tone, ejaculated 'A little louder, Mary.' A less experienced artist might well have been taken aback by this sudden infraction of dramatic proprieties. Miss Anderson, however, did not lose her nerve, but simply took the hint in good part and acted upon it. There is very little reason to dwell at any length upon the piece. Miss Anderson will, doubtless, take a speedy opportunity of appearing in some other work in which her capacity as an actress can be better gauged than in Maria Lovell's bit of tawdry sentiment. A real power of delineating passion was exhibited in the scene where Parthenia repulses the advances of her too venturesome admirer, and in this direction, to our minds, the best efforts of the lady tend. All we can do at present is to chronicle Miss Anderson's complete success, the re-calls being so numerous as to defy particularization."

The Times, 3rd September, 1883.

"Miss Mary Anderson, although but three or four and twenty, has for several years past occupied a leading position in the United States, and ranks as the highest of the American 'stars,' whose effulgence Mr. Abbey relies upon to attract the public at the Lyceum in Mr. Irving's absence. Recommendations of this high order were more than sufficient to insure Miss Anderson a cordial reception. They were such as to dispose a sympathetic audience to make the most ample allowance for nervousness on the part of the *débutante*, and to distrust all impressions they might have of an unfavourable kind, or at least to grant the possession of a more complete knowledge of the lady's attainments to those who had trumpeted her praise so loudly. That such should have been the mood of the house, was a circumstance not without its influence on

the events of the evening. It was manifestly owing in some measure to the critical spirit being subordinated for the time being to the hospitable, that Miss Anderson was able to obtain all the outward and visible signs of a dramatic triumph in a *rôle* which intrinsically had little to commend it. . . . . Usually it is the rude manliness, the uncouth virtues, the awkward and childlike submissiveness of that tamed Bull of Bashan (Ingomar) that absorbs the attention of a theatrical audience. On Saturday evening the centre of interest was, of course, transferred to Parthenia. To the interpretation of this character Miss Anderson brings natural gifts of rare excellence, gifts of face and form and action, which suffice almost themselves to play the part; and the warmth of the applause which greeted her as she first tripped upon the stage expressed the admiration no less than the welcome of the house. Her severely simple robes of virgin white, worn with classic grace, revealed a figure as lissome and perfect of contour as a draped Venus of Thorwaldsen, her face seen under her mass of dark brown hair, negligently bound with a riband, was too *mignonne*, perhaps, to be classic, but looked pretty and girlish. A performance so graced could not fail to be pleasing. And yet it was impossible not to feel as the play progressed, that to the fine embodiment of the romantic heroine, art was in some degree wanting. The beautiful Parthenia, like a soulless statue, pleased the eye, but left the heart untouched. It became evident that faults of training or, perhaps, of temperament, were to be set off against the actress's unquestionable merits. The elegant artificiality of the American school, a tendency to pose and be self-conscious, to smirk even, if the word may be permitted, especially when advancing to the footlights to receive a full measure of applause, were fatal to such sentiment as even so stilted a play could be made to yield. It was but too evident that Parthenia was at all times more concerned with the fall of her drapery than with the effect of her speeches, and that gesture, action, intonation—every thing which constitutes a living individuality were in her case not so much the outcome of the feeling proper to the character, as the manifestation of diligent painstaking art which had not yet learnt to conceal itself. The gleam of the smallest spark of genius would have been a welcome relief to the

monotony of talent . . . . . It must not be forgotten, however, that a highly artificial play like *Ingomar* is by no means a favourable medium for the display of an actress's powers, though it may fairly indicate their nature. Before a definite rank can be assigned to her among English actresses, Miss Anderson must be seen in some of her other characters."

Daily News, 3rd September, 1883.

"It will be recollected that Mr. Irving, in his farewell speech at the Lyceum Theatre, on the 28th of July, made a point of bespeaking a kindly welcome for Miss Mary Anderson on her appearance at his theatre during his absence, as the actress he alluded to was a lady whose beauty and talent had made her the favourite of America, from Maine to California. It would not perhaps be unfair to attribute to this cordial introduction something of the special interest which was evidently aroused by Miss Anderson's *début* here on Saturday night. English playgoers recognize but vaguely the distinguishing characteristics of actors and actresses, whose fame has been won wholly by their performances on the other side of the Atlantic. It was therefore just as well that before Miss Anderson arrived some definite claim as to her pretensions should be authoritatively put forward. These would, it must be confessed, have been liable to misconception if they had been judged solely by her first performance on the London stage. '*Ingomar*' is not a play, and *Parthenia* is certainly not a character, calculated to call forth the higher powers of an ambitious actress. As a matter of fact, Miss Anderson, who began her historic career at an early age, and is even now of extremely youthful appearance, has had plenty of experience and success in *rôles* of much more difficulty, and much wider possibilities. Her modest enterprise on Saturday night was quite as successful as could have been anticipated. There is not enough human reality about Parthenia to allow her representative to interest very deeply the sympathy of her hearers. There is not enough poetry in the drama to enable the actress to mar our imagination by calling her own into play. What Miss Anderson could

achieve was this: she was able in the first place to prove, by the aid of the Massilian maiden's becoming, yet exacting attire, that her personal advantages have been by no means overrated. Her features regular yet full of expression, her figure slight but not spare, the pose of her small and graceful head, all these, together with a girlish prettiness of manner, and a singularly refined bearing, are quite enough to account for at least one of the phases of Miss Anderson's popularity. Her voice is not wanting in melody of a certain kind, though its tones lack variety. Her accent is slight, and seldom unpleasant. Of her elocution it is scarcely fair to judge until she has caught more accurately the pitch required for the theatre. For the accomplishment of any great things Miss Anderson had not on Saturday night any opportunity, nor did her treatment of such mild pathos and passion as the character permitted impress us with the idea that her command of deep feeling is as yet matured. So far as it goes, however, her method is extremely winning, and her further efforts, especially in the direction of comedy and romantic drama, will be watched with interest, and may be anticipated with pleasure."

Morning Post, 3rd September, 1883.

"LYCEUM THEATRE.

"This theatre was reopened under the management of Mr. Henry Abbey on Saturday evening, when was revived Mrs. Lovell's play called '*Ingomar*,' a picturesque but somewhat ponderous work of German origin, first produced some thirty years ago at Drury Lane with Mr. James Anderson and Miss Vandenhoff as the principal personages. The interest centres not so much in the barbarian Ingomar as in his enchantress, Parthenia, of whom Miss Mary Anderson, an American artist of fine renown, proves a comely and efficient representative. In summing up the qualifications of an actress the Transatlantic critics never fail to take into account her personal charms—a fascinating factor. Borne on the wings of an enthusiastic press, the fame of Miss Anderson's loveliness had reached our shores long before her own arrival. The Britishers were prepared to see a very handsome lady, and they have not been

disappointed. Miss Anderson's beauty is of Grecian type, with a head of classic contour, finely-chiselled features, and a tall statuesque figure, whose Hellenic expression a graceful costume of antique design sets off to the best advantage. You fancy that you have seen her before, and so perhaps you have upon the canvas of Angelica Kauffman. For the rest, Miss Anderson is very clever and highly accomplished. Her talents are brilliant and abundant, and they have been carefully cultivated to every perfection of art save one—the concealment of it. She has grace, but it is studied, not negligent grace; her action is always picturesque and obviously premeditated; everything she says and does is impressive, but it speaks a foregone conclusion. Her acting is polished and in correct taste. What it wants is freshness, spontaneity, *abandon*. Among English artists of a bygone age her style might probably find a parallel in the stately elegance and artificial grandeur of the Kembles. It has nothing in common with the electric *verve* and romantic ardour of Edmund Kean. Of the *feu sacré* which irradiated Rachel and gives to Bernhardt splendour ineffable, Miss Anderson has not a spark. She is not inspired. Hers is a pure, bright, steady light; but it lacks mystic effulgence. It is not empyreal. It is not 'the light that never was on sea or land—the consecration and the poet's dream.' It is not genius. It is talent. In a word, Miss Anderson is beautiful, winsome, gifted, and accomplished. To say this is to say much, and it fills to the brim the measure of legitimate praise. She is an eminently good, but not a great artist."

Daily Telegraph, 3rd September, 1883.

"There was a natural desire to see, nay, rather let us say to welcome Miss Mary Anderson, who made her *début* as Parthenia in 'Ingomar' on Saturday evening last. The fame of this actress had already preceded her. An enthusiastic climber up the rugged mountain paths of the art she had elected to serve . . . . . an earnest volunteer in the almost forlorn cause of the poetical drama: a believer in the past, not merely because it is the past, but because in it was embodied much of the beautiful and the hopeful that has been lost to us, Miss Mary Anderson was assured an honest

greeting at a theatre of cherished memories . . . . . It has been said that the friends of Miss Anderson were very ill-advised to allow her to appear as Parthenia in the now almost-forgotten play of 'Ingomar.' We venture to differ entirely with this opinion. That the American actress interested, moved, and at times delighted her audience in a play supposed to be unfashionable and out of date, is, in truth, the best feather that can be placed in her cap . . . . . There must clearly be something in an actress who can not only hold her own as Parthenia, but in addition dissipate the dulness of 'Ingomar' . . . . . And now comes the question, how far Miss Mary Anderson succeeded in a task that requires both artistic instinct and personal charm to carry it to a successful issue. The lady has been called classical, Greek, and so on, but is, in truth, a very modern reproduction of a classical type—a Venus by Mr. Gibson, rather than a Venus by Milo; a classic draped figure of a Wedgwood plaque more than an echo from the Parthenon . . . . The actress has evidently been well taught, and is both an apt and clever pupil; she speaks clearly, enunciates well, occasionally conceals the art she has so closely studied, and is at times both tender and graceful. . . . . Her one great fault is insincerity, or, in other words, inability thoroughly to grasp the sympathies of the thoughtful part of her audience. She is destitute of the supreme gift of sensibility that Talma considers essential, and Diderot maintains is detrimental to the highest acting. Diderot may be right, and Talma may be wrong, but we are convinced that the art Miss Anderson has practised is, on the whole, barren and unpersuasive. She does not appear to feel the words she speaks, or to be deeply moved by the situations in which she is placed. She is for ever acting—thinking of her attitudes, posing very prettily, but still posing for all that. . . . . She weeps, but there are no tears in her eyes; she murmurs her love verses with charming cadence, but there is no throb of heart in them. . . . . These things, however, did not seem to affect her audience. They cheered her as if their hearts were really touched. . . . . These, however, are but early impressions, and we shall be anxious to see her in still another delineation."

Standard, 10th December, 1883.

"LYCEUM THEATRE.

"Miss Mary Anderson has won such favour from audiences at the Lyceum, that anything she did would attract interest and curiosity. Galatea, in Mr. W. S. Gilbert's mythological comedy, PYGMALION AND GALATEA, has, moreover, been spoken of as one of the actress's chief successes, and a crowded house on Saturday evening was the result of the announcement of its revival. An ideal Galatea could scarcely be realised, for there should be in the triumph of the sculptor's art, endowed by the gods with life, a supernatural grace and beauty. The singular picturesqueness of Miss Anderson's poses and gestures, the consequences of careful study of the best sculpture, has been noted in all that she has done, and this quality fits her peculiarly for the part of the vivified statue. In this respect it is little to say that Galatea has never before been represented with so near an approach to perfection."

Daily News, 10th December, 1883.

"The part of Galatea, in which Miss Anderson made her first appearance in England at the Lyceum Theatre on Saturday evening, enables this delightful actress to exhibit in her fullest charms the exquisite grace of form and the simple elegance of gesture and movement by virtue of which she stands wholly without a rival on the stage. Whether in the alcove, where she is first discovered motionless upon the pedestal, or when miraculously endued with life, she moves, a beautiful yet discordant element in the Athenian sculptor's household. The statuesque outline and the perfect harmony between the figure of the actress and her surroundings, were striking enough to draw more than once from the crowded theatre, otherwise hushed and attentive, an audible expression of pleasure. Rarely, indeed, can an attempt to satisfy by actual bodily presentment the ideal of a poetical legend have approached so nearly to absolute perfection."

The Morning Post, 10th December, 1883.

"'Pygmalion and Galatea,' a play in which Miss Mary Anderson is said to have scored her most generally accepted success in her own country, has now taken at the Lyceum the place of 'The Lady of Lyons,' a drama certainly not well fitted to the young actress's capabilities. Mr. Gilbert's well-known fairy comedy is in many respects exactly suited to the display of Miss Anderson's special merits. Its heroine is a statue, and a very beautiful simulation of chiselled marble was sure to be achieved by a lady of Miss Anderson's personal advantages, and of her approved skill in artistic posing. Moreover, the sub-acid spirit of the piece rarely allows its sentiment to go very deep, and it is in the expression—perhaps, we should write the experience—of really earnest emotion, that Miss Anderson's chief deficiency lies. Galatea is moreover by no means the strongest acting part in the comedy, affording few of the opportunities for the exhibition of passion, which fall to the lot of the heart-broken and indignant wife, Cynisca. Although in 1871, on the original production of the play, Mrs. Kendal made much of Galatea's womanly pathos, there is plenty of room for an effective rendering of the character, which deliberately hides the woman in the statue. Such a rendering is, as might have been expected, Miss Anderson's. Even in her ingenious scenes of comedy with Leucippe and with Chrysos, there is no more dramatic vivacity than might be looked for in a temporarily animated block of stone. Her love for the sculptor who has given her vitality is perfectly cold in its purity. There is no spontaneity in the accents in which it is told, no amorous impulse to which it gives rise. This new Galatea, however, is fair to look upon—so fair in her statuesque attitudes and her shapely presence, that the infatuation of the man who created her is readily understood. By the classic beauty of her features and the perfect moulding of her figure she is enabled to give all possible credibility to the legend of her miraculous birth. Moreover, the refinement of her bearing and manner allows no jarring note to be struck, and although, when Galatea sadly returns to marble not a tear is shed by the spectator, it is felt that a plausible and consistent interpretation of the character has been given."

The Times, 10th December, 1883.

"Mr. Gilbert's play PYGMALION AND GALATEA, is a perversion of Ovid's fable of the Sculptor of Cyprus, the main interest of which upon the stage is derived from its cynical contrast between the innocence of the beautiful nymph of stone whom Pygmalion's love endows with life, and the conventional prudishness of Society. Obviously the purpose of such a travesty may be fulfilled without any call upon the deeper emotions—upon the stress of passion, which springs from that 'knowledge of good and evil' transmitted by Eve to all her daughters. It is sufficient that the living and breathing Galatea of the play should seem to embody the classic marble, that she should move about the stage with statuesque grace and that she should artlessly discuss the relations of the sexes in the language of double intent. Miss Anderson's degree of talent, as shown in the impersonations she has already given us, and her command of classical pose, have already suggested this character as one for which she was eminently fitted. It was therefore no surprise to those who have been least disposed to admit this lady's claim to greatness as an actress that her Galatea on Saturday night should have been an ideally beautiful and tolerably complete embodiment of the part. If the heart was not touched, as, indeed in such a play it scarcely ought to be, the eye was enabled to repose upon the finest *tableau vivant* that the stage has ever seen. Upon the curtains of the alcove being withdrawn, where the statue still inanimate rests upon its pedestal, the admiration of the house was unbounded. Not only was the pose of the figure under the lime-light artistic in the highest sense, but the tresses and the drapery were most skilfully arranged to look like the work of the chisel. It is significant of the measure of Miss Anderson's art, that in her animated moments subsequently she should not have excelled the plastic grace of this first picture. At the same time, to her credit it must be said, that she never fell much below it. Her movements on the stage, her management of her drapery, her attitudes were full of classic beauty. Actresses there have been who have given us much more than this statuesque posing, who have transformed Galatea into a woman of flesh and

blood, animated by true womanly love for Pygmalion as the first man on whom her eyes alight. Sentiment of this kind whether intended by the author or not, would scarcely harmonize with the satirical spirit of the play, and the innocent prattle which Miss Anderson gives us in place of it meets sufficiently well the requirements of the case dramatically, leaving the spectator free to derive pleasure from his sense of the beautiful, here so strikingly appealed to, from the occasionally audacious turns of the dialogue in relation to social questions, from the disconcerted airs of Pygmalion at the contemplation of his own handiwork, and from the real womanly jealousy of Cynisca."

The Graphic, 14th December, 1883.

"Never, perhaps, have the playgoing public been so much at variance with the critics as in the case of the young American actress now performing at the Lyceum Theatre. There is no denying the fact that Miss Anderson is, to use a popular expression, 'the rage'; but it is equally certain that she owes this position in very slight degree to the published accounts of her acting. From the first she has been received, with few exceptions, only in a coldly critical spirit; and yet her reputation has gone on gathering in strength till now, the Lyceum is crowded nightly with fashionable folk whose carriages block the way; and those who would secure places to witness her performances are met at the box offices with the information that all the seats have been taken long in advance. How are we to account for the fact that this young lady who came but the other day among us a stranger, even her name being scarcely known, and who still refrains from those 'bold advertisements,' which in the case of so many other managers and performers usurp the functions of the trumpet of fame, has made her way in a few short months only to the very highest place in the estimation of our playgoing public? We can see no possible explanation save the simple one that her acting affords pleasure in a high degree; for those who insinuate that her beauty alone is the attraction may easily be

answered by reference to numerous actresses of unquestionable personal attractions who have failed to arouse anything approaching to the same degree of interest. As regards the unfavourable critics, we are inclined to think that they have been unable to shake off the associations of the essentially artificial characters—Parthenia and Pauline—in which Miss Anderson has unfortunately chosen to appear. Further complaints of artificiality and coldness have, it is true, been put forth *à propos* of her first appearance on Saturday evening in Mr. Gilbert's beautiful mythological comedy of PYGMALION AND GALATEA; but protests are beginning to appear in some quarters, and we are much mistaken if this graceful and accomplished actress is not destined yet to win the favour of her censors. The statuesque beauty of her appearance and the classic grace of all her movements and attitudes, as the Greek statue suddenly endowed with life, have received general recognition; but not less remarkable were the simplicity, the tenderness, and, on due occasion, the passionate impulse of her acting, though the impersonation is no doubt in the chastened classical vein. It is difficult to imagine how a realization of Mr. Gilbert's conception could be made more perfect."

The World, 12th December, 1883.

"The revival of PYGMALION AND GALATEA at the Lyceum on Saturday last, with Miss Mary Anderson in the part of the animated statue, excited considerable interest and drew together a large and enthusiastic audience. Without attempting any comparison between Mrs. Kendal and the young American actress, it may at once be stated, that the latter gave an interesting and original rendering of Galatea. As the velvet curtain drawn aside disclosed the snowy statue on its pedestal, in a pose of classic beauty, it seemed hard to believe that such sculptural forms, the delicate features, the fine arms, the graceful figure, could be of any other material than marble. The gradual awakening to life, the joy and wonder of the bright young creature, to whom existence is still a mystery, were charmingly indicated; and when Miss Anderson stepped forward slowly in her

soft clinging draperies, with her pretty brown hair lightly powdered, she satisfied the most fastidiously critical sense of beauty. Galatea, as Miss Anderson understands her, is statuesque; but Galatea is also a woman, perfect in the purity of ideal womanhood. The chief characteristics of her nature are innate modesty and refinement, which, though, perhaps, not strictly fashionable attributes, are appropriate enough in a daughter of the gods. When she loves, it is without any airs and graces. She has not an atom of self-consciousness; she cannot premeditate; she loves because she *must*, rather than because she will, because it is the condition of her life. Some of the naïve remarks she has to utter, might in clumsy lips seem coarse. Miss Anderson delivered them with consummate grace and innocence, but her fine smile, her bright sparkling eye, proved sufficiently, that the innocence was not stupidity. The first long speech at the conclusion of which she kneels to Pygmalion was beautifully rendered, and elicited a burst of applause, which was repeated at intervals throughout the evening. Her poses were always graceful, sometimes strikingly beautiful.

"Miss Anderson has the true sense of rhythm and the clearest enunciation; she has a deep and musical voice, which in moments of pathos thrills with a sweet and tender inflection. She has seized, in this instance, upon the touching rather than the humorous side of Galatea, the pure and innocent girl who is not fit to live upon this world. She is only not human because she is superior to human folly; she cannot understand sin because it is so sweet; she asks to be taught a fault; but the womanly love and devotion, and unselfishness are all there, writ in clear and uncompromising characters. The first and last acts were decidedly the best; in the latter especially Miss Anderson touched a true pathetic chord, and fairly elicited the pity and sympathy of the audience. With a gentle wonder and true dignity she meets the gradual dropping away of her illusion, the crumbling of her unreasoning faith, the cruel stings when her spiritual nature is misunderstood, and her actions misinterpreted. She is jarred by the rough contact of commonplace facts, and ruffled and wounded by the strange and cynical indifference to her sufferings of the man she loves. At last when she can bear no

more, yet uncomplaining to the last, like a flower broken on its stem, shrinking and sensitive, she totters out with one loud cry of woe, the expression of her agony. Miss Anderson is a poet, she brings everything to the level of her own refined and artistic sensibility, and the result is that while she presents us with a picture of ideal womanhood, she must appeal of necessity rather to our imaginations than to our senses, and may by some persons be considered cold. Once or twice she dropped her voice so as to become almost inaudible, and occasionally forced her low tones more than was quite agreeable; but whether in speech, in gesture, or in delicate suggestive byplay, her performance is essentially finished. One or two little actions may be noted, such as the instinctive recoil of alarmed modesty when Pygmalion blames her for saying 'things that others would reprove,' or her expression of troubled wonder to find that it is 'possible to say one thing and mean another.''

Daily Telegraph, 10th December, 1883.

"PYGMALION AND GALATEA.

"It is the fashion to judge of Miss Anderson outside her capacity and competency as an actress. Ungraciously enough she is regarded and reviewed as the thing of beauty that is a joy for ever, and her infatuated admirers view her first as a picture, last as an artist. If, then, public taste was agitated by the Parthenia who lolled in her mother's lap and twisted flower garlands at the feet of her noble savage Ingomar; if society fluttered with excitement at the sight of the faultless Pauline gazing into the fire on the eve of her ill-fated marriage, how much more jubilation there will be now that Miss Mary Anderson, a lovely woman in studied drapery, stands posed at once as a statue, and as a subject for the photographic pictures which will flood the town. Unquestionably Miss Anderson never looked so well as a statue, both lifeless and animated, never comported herself with such grace, never gave such a perfect embodiment of purity and innocence. In marble she was a statue motionless; in life she was a statue half warmed. There are those who believe, or who try to persuade themselves, that this is all

Galatea has to do—to appear behind a curtain as a '*pose plastique*,' to make an excellent '*tableau vivant*,' and to wear Greek drapery, as if she had stepped down from a niche in the Acropolis. All this Miss Mary Anderson does to perfection. She is a living, breathing statue. A more beautiful object in its innocent severity the stage has seldom seen. But is this all that Galatea has to do? Those who have studied Mr. Gilbert's poem will scarcely say so. Galatea descended from her pedestal has to become human, and has to reconcile her audience to the contradictory position of a woman, who, presumably innocent of the world and its ways, is unconsciously cynical and exquisitely pathetic. We grant that it is a most difficult part to play. Only an artist can give effect to the comedy, or touch the true chord of sentiment that underlies the idea of Galatea. But to make Galatea consistently inhuman, persistently frigid, and monotonously spiritual, is, if not absolutely incorrect, at least glaringly ineffective. If Galatea does not become a breathing, living woman when she descends from her pedestal, a woman capable of love, a woman with a foreshadowing of passion, a woman of tears and tenderness, then the play goes for nothing. . . . . Miss Anderson reads Galatea in a severer fashion. She is a Galatea perfectly formed, whose heart has not yet been adjusted. She shrinks from humanity. She wants to be classical and severe, and her last cry to Pygmalion, instead of being the utterance of a tortured soul, is 'monotonous and hollow as a ghost's.' It is with no desire to be discourteous that we venture any comparison between the Galatea of Miss Anderson and of Mrs. Kendal. The comparison should only be made on the point of reading. Yet surely there can be no doubt that Mrs. Kendal's idea of Galatea, while appealing to the heart, is more dramatically effective. It illumines the poem."

The Times, 28th January, 1884.

"LYCEUM THEATRE.

"Those who have suspected that Miss Mary Anderson was well advised in clinging to the artificial class of characters hitherto

associated with her engagement at the Lyceum—characters, that is to say, making little call upon the emotional faculties of their exponent—will not be disposed to modify their opinion from her 'creation' of the new part of distinctly higher scope in Mr. Gilbert's one act drama, COMEDY AND TRAGEDY, produced for the first time on Saturday night. Though passing in a single scene, this piece furnishes a more crucial test of Miss Anderson's powers than any of her previous assumptions in this country. Unfortunately it also assigns limits to those powers which few actresses of the second or even third rank need despair of attaining. Such a piece as this, it will be seen, makes the highest demands upon an actress. Tenderly, affectionate, and true with her husband, when she arranges with him the plan upon which so much depends: heartless and *insouciante* in manner while she receives her guests; affectedly gay and vivacious while her husband's fate is trembling in the balance; deeply tragic in her anguish when her fortitude has broken down; and finally overcome with joy as her husband is restored to her arms; she has to pass and repass, without a pause, from one extreme of her art to the other. There is probably no actress but Sarah Bernhardt who could render all the various phases of this character as they should be rendered. There is only one phase of it that comes fairly within Miss Anderson's grasp. Of vivacity there is not a spark in her nature; a heavy-footed impassiveness weighs upon all her efforts to be sprightly. The refinement, the subtlety, the animation, the *ton*, of an actress of the Comédie Française she does not so much as suggest. Womanly sympathy, tenderness, and trust, those qualities which constitute a far deeper and more abiding charm than statuesque beauty, are equally absent from an impersonation which in its earlier phases is almost distressingly laboured. While the actress is entertaining her guests with improvised comedy, moreover, no under current of emotion, no suggestion of suppressed anxiety is perceptible. It is not till this double *rôle*, which demands a degree of *finesse* evidently beyond Miss Anderson's range, is exchanged for the unaffected expression of mental torture that the actress rises to the occasion, and here it is pleasing to record, she displayed on Saturday night

an earnestness and an intensity which won her an ungrudging round of applause. Miss Anderson's conception of the character is excellent, it is her powers of execution that are defective, and we do not omit from these the quality of her voice, which at times sinks into a hard and unsympathetic key."

Morning Post, 28th January, 1884.

"A change effected in the programme at the Lyceum Theatre on Saturday night makes Mr. Gilbert responsible for the whole entertainment of the evening. His fairy comedy PYGMALION AND GALATEA, is now supplemented by a new dramatic study in which, under the ambitious title 'Comedy and Tragedy,' he has been at special pains to provide Miss Mary Anderson with an effective *rôle*. This popular young actress has every reason to congratulate herself upon the opportunity for distinction thus placed in her way, for Mr. Gilbert has accomplished his task in a thoroughly workmanlike manner. In the course of a single act he has demanded from the exponent of his principal character the most varied histrionic capabilities, for he has asked her to be by turns the consummate actress and the unsophisticated woman, the gracious hostess and the vindictive enemy, the humorous reciter and the tragedy queen. Nor has he done this merely by inventing plausible excuses for a succession of conscious assumptions, such as those of the entertainer who appears first in one guise and then in another, that he may exhibit his deft versatility. There is a genuine dramatic motive for the display by the heroine of 'Comedy and Tragedy' of quickly changing emotions and accomplishments. She acts because circumstances really call upon her to act, and not because the showman pulls the strings of his puppet as the whim of the moment may suggest. The question is, how far Miss Anderson is able to realize for us the mental agony and the characteristic self-command of such a woman as Clarice in such a state as hers. The answer, as given on Saturday by a demonstrative audience, was wholly favourable; as it suggests itself to a calmer judgment the kindly verdict must be qualified by reservations many and serious. We

may admit at once that Miss Anderson deserves all praise for her exhibition of earnest force, and for the nervous spirit with which she attacks her work. It is a pleasant surprise to see her depending upon something beyond her skill in the art of the *tableau vivant*. The ring of her deep voice may not always be melodious, but at any rate it is true, and the burst of passionate entreaty carries with it the genuine conviction of distress. What is missing is the distinction of bearing that should mark a leading member of the famous *troupe* of players, grace of movement as distinguished from grace of power, lightening of touch in Clarice's comedy, and refinement of expression in her tragedy. At present the impersonation is rough and almost clumsy whilst, at times, the vigorous elocution almost descends to the level of ranting. Many of these faults may, however, have been due to Miss Anderson's evident nervousness, and to the whirlwind of excitement in which she hurried through her task; and we shall be quite prepared to find her performance improve greatly under less trying conditions."

The Scotsman, 28th April, 1884.

"Last night the young American actress, who has, during the past few months, acquired such great popularity in London, made her first appearance before an Edinburgh audience in the same character she chose for her Metropolitan *début*—that of *Parthenia* in 'Ingomar.' The piece itself is essentially old-fashioned. It is one of that category of 'sentimental dramas' which were in vogue thirty or forty years ago, but are not sufficiently complex in their intrigue, or subtle in their analysis of emotion, to suit the somewhat cloyed palates of the present generation of playgoers. Yet, through two or three among the long list of plays of this type, there runs like a vein of gold amid the dross, a noble and true idea that preserves them from the common fate, and one of these few pieces is 'Ingomar.' Its blank verse may be stilted, its action often forced and unreal; but the pictures it presents of a daughter's devotion, a maiden's purity, a brave man's love and supreme self-sacrifice, are drawn with a breadth and a simplicity of outline that make them at once

appreciable, and they are pictures upon which few people can help looking with pleasure and sympathy. We do not say that Miss Anderson could not possibly have chosen a better character in which to introduce herself to an Edinburgh audience; but certainly it would be difficult to conceive a more charming interpretation of *Parthenia* than she gave last night. To personal attractions of the highest order she adds a rich and musical voice, capable of a wide range of accent and inflection, a command of gesture which is abundantly varied, but always graceful and—what is, perhaps, of more moment to the artist than all else—an unmistakable capacity for grasping the essential significance of a character, and identifying herself thoroughly with it. Her delineation is not only exquisitely picturesque; it leaves behind the impression of a thoughtful conception wrought out with consistency, and developed with real dramatic power. The lighter phases of Parthenia's nature were, as they should be, kept generally prominent, but when the demand came for stronger and tenser emotions the actress was always able to respond to it—as for instance in Parthenia's defiance of Ingomar, when his love finds its first uncouth utterance, in her bitter anguish when she thinks he has left her for ever, and in her final avowal of love and devotion. These are the crucial points in the rendering of the part; and they were so played last night by Miss Anderson as to prove that she is equal to much more exacting *rôles*. She was excellently supported by Mr. Barnes as Ingomar, and fairly well by the representatives of the numerous minor personages who contribute to the development of the story, without having any individual interest of their own. Miss Anderson won an enthusiastic reception at the hands of a large and discriminating audience, being called before the curtain at the close of each act."

Glasgow Evening Star, 6th May, 1884.

"MISS ANDERSON AT THE ROYALTY.

"No modern actress has created such a *furore* in this country as Miss Anderson. Coming to us from America with the reputation of being the foremost exponent of histrionic art in that country, it

was but natural that her advent should be regarded with very critical eyes by many who thought that America claimed too much for their charming actress. Thus predisposed to find as many faults as possible in one who boldly challenged their verdict on her own merits alone, it is not surprising that Metropolitan critics were almost unanimous in their opinion that Miss Anderson, although a clever actress and a very beautiful woman, was not by any means a great artiste. They did not hesitate to say, moreover, that much of her success as an actress was due to her physical grace and beauty. We have no hesitation in stating a directly contrary opinion."

Glasgow Herald, 6th May, 1884.

"MISS ANDERSON AT THE ROYALTY THEATRE.

"Since PYGMALION AND GALATEA was produced at the Haymarket Theatre, fully a dozen years ago, when the part of GALATEA was created by Mrs. Kendal, quite a number of actresses have essayed the character. Most of them have succeeded in presenting a carefully thought-out and intelligently-executed picture ; few have been able to realise in their intensity, and give adequate embodiment to, the dreamy utterances of the animated statue. It is a character which only consummate skill can appropriately represent. The play is indeed a cunningly-devised fable, but *Galatea* is the one central figure on which it hangs. Its humour and its satire are so exquisitely keen that they must needs be delicately wielded. That a statue should be vivified and endowed with speech and reason is a bold conception, and it requires no ordinary artist to depict the emotion of such a mythical being. For this duty Miss Anderson last night proved herself more than capable. Her interpretation of the part is essentially her own ; it differs in some respects from previous representations of the character, and to none of them is it inferior. In her conception of the part, the importance of statuesque posing has been studied to the minutest detail, and in this respect art could not well be linked with greater natural advantages than are possessed by Miss Anderson. When, in the opening scene, the curtains of the recess in the sculptor's studio were thrown back from the statue, a

perfect wealth of art was displayed in its pose; it seemed indeed to be a realization of the author's conception of a figure which all but breathes, yet still is only cold, dull stone. From beginning to end, Miss Anderson's *Galatea* is a captivating study in the highest sphere of histrionic art. There is no part of it that can be singled out as better than another. It is a compact whole such as only few actresses may hope to equal."

Dublin Evening Mail, 22nd March, 1884.

"MARY ANDERSON AT THE GAIETY.

"Notwithstanding all that photography has done for the last few weeks to familiarize Dublin with Miss Anderson's counterfeit presentment, the original took the Gaiety audience last night by surprise. Her beauty outran expectation. It was, moreover, generically different from what the camera had suggested. It required an effort to recall in the brilliant, mobile, speaking countenance before us the classic regularity and harmony of the features which we had admired on cardboard. Brilliancy is the single word that best sums up the characteristics of Miss Anderson's face, figure and movements on the stage. But it is a brilliancy that is altogether natural and spontaneous—a natural gift, not acquisition; and it is a brilliancy which, while it is all alive with intelligence and sympathy, is instinct to the core with a virginal sweetness and purity. In 'Ingomar' the heroine comes very early and abruptly on the scene before the audience is interested in her arrival, or has, indeed, got rid of the garish realities of the street. But Miss Anderson's appearance spoke for itself without any aid from the playwright. The house, after a moment's hesitation, broke out into sudden and quickly-growing applause, which was evidently a tribute not to the artist, but to the woman. She understood this herself, and evidently enjoyed her triumph with a frank and girlish pleasure. She had conquered her audience before opening her lips. She is of rather tall stature, a figure slight but perfectly modelled, her well-shaped head dressed Greek fashion with the simple knot behind, her arms, which the Greek costume displayed to the shoulder, long, white,

and of a roundness seldom attained so early in life, her walk and all her attitudes consummately graceful and expressive. A more general form of disparagement is that which pretends to account for all Miss Anderson's popularity by her beauty. It is her beauty, these people say, not her acting, that draws the crowd. We suspect the fact to be that Miss Anderson's uncommon beauty is rather a hindrance than a help to the perception of her real dramatic merits. People do not easily believe that one and the same person can be distinguished in the highest degree by different and independent excellences. They find it easier to make one of the excellences do duty for both. Miss Anderson, it may be admitted, is not a Sarah Bernhardt. At the same time we must observe that at twenty-three the incomparable Sarah was not the consummate artist that she is now, and has been for many years. We are not at all inclined to rank Miss Anderson as an actress at a lower level than the very high one of Miss Helen Faucit, of whose Antigone she reminded us in several passages last night. Miss Faucit was more statuesque in her poses, more classical, and, perhaps, touched occasionally a more profoundly pathetic chord. But the balance is redeemed by other qualities of Miss Anderson's acting, quite apart from all consideration of personal beauty.

"'Ingomar,' it must be said, is a mere melodrama, and as such does not afford the highest test of an actor's capacity. The wonder is that Miss Anderson makes so much of it. In her hands it was really a stirring and very effective play."

Dublin Daily Express, 28th March, 1884.

"MISS ANDERSON AS GALATEA.

"Nothing that the sculptor's art could create could be more beautiful than the still figure of *Galatea*, in classic *pose*, with gracefully flowing robes, looking down from her pedestal on the hands that have given her form, and it is not too much to say that nothing could be added to render more perfect the illusion. The whole *pose*—her aspect, the *contour* of her head, the exquisite turn of the stately throat, the faultless symmetry of shoulder and

arms—everything is in keeping with the realization of the most perfect, most beautiful, and most illusive figure that has ever been witnessed on the stage. Miss Anderson indeed is liberally endowed with physical charms, so fascinating that we can understand an audience finding it not a little difficult to refrain from giving the rein to enthusiasm in the presence of this fairest of *Galateas*. From these remarks, however, it is not intended to be inferred that the young American is merely a graceful creature with a 'pretty face.' Miss Anderson is unquestionably a fine actress, and the high position which she now deservedly occupies amongst her sister artists, we are inclined to think, has been gained perhaps less through her personal attractions than by the sterling characteristics of her art. Each of her scenes bears the stamp of intelligence of an uncommon order, and perhaps not the least remarkable feature in her portraiture of *Galatea* is that her effects, one and all, are produced without a suspicion of straining. Those who were present in the crowded theatre last night, and saw the actress in the *rôle* —said to be her finest—had, we are sure, no room to qualify the high reputation which preceded the impersonation."

Chapter IX.

MARY ANDERSON AS AN ACTRESS.

THE author approaches this, his concluding chapter, with some degree of diffidence. Though he has in the foregoing pages essayed something like a portrait of a very distinguished artist, he is not by profession a dramatic critic. He does not belong to that noble band at whose nod the actor is usually supposed to tremble. He is not a "first-nighter," who, by the light of the midnight oil, dips his mighty pen in the ink which is to seal on to-morrow's broad-sheet, as he proudly imagines, the professional fate of the artists who are submitted for his censure or his praise. Not that he is by any means an implicit believer in the verdict of the professional critic. An actor who succeeds, should often fail according to the recognized canons of dramatic criticism, and the reverse. That the beautiful harmony of nature and the eternal fitness of things dramatic are not always preserved, is due to that *profanum vulgus* which sometimes reverses the decisions of those dramatic divinities who sit enthroned, like the Twelve Cæsars, in the sacred temple of criticism, as the inspired representatives of the press.

Those who have been at the trouble to read the various and conflicting notices of the chief London journals upon Mary Anderson's performances—for those of the great provincial towns she visited present a singular unanimity in her favour—must have found it difficult, if not impossible, to decide either on her merits as an artist, or on the true place to be assigned to her in the temple of the drama. The veriest misogynist among critics was compelled, in spite of himself, to confess to the charm of her strange beauty. Hers, as all agreed, was the loveliest face and the most graceful figure which had appeared on the London boards within the memory of a generation. According to some she was an accomplished actress, but she lacked that divine spark which stamps the true artist. Others attributed her success to nothing but her personal grace and beauty; while one critic, bolder than his fellows, even went so far as to declare that whether she wore the attire of a Grecian maid, of a fine French lady of a century ago, or of the fabled Galatea, only pretty Miss Anderson, of Louisville, Kentucky, peeped out through every disguise. Several causes, perhaps, combined to this uncertain sound which went forth from the trumpet of the dramatic critic. Mary Anderson was an American artist, who came here, it is true, with a great American reputation; but so had come others before her, some of whom had wholly failed to stand the fierce test of the London footlights. Then to "damn her with faint praise," would not only be a safe course at the outset, but the steps to a becoming *locus penitentiæ* would be easy and gradual if the vane should, in spite of the critics, veer round to the point of popular favour. One of the most distinguished of English journalists

lately observed in the House of Commons that certain writers in back parlours were in the habit of palming off their effusions as the voice of the great English public, till that voice made itself heard. When the voice of the English theatre-going public upon Mary Anderson came to make itself heard in the crowded and enthusiastic audiences of the Lyceum, in the friendship of all that was most cultivated and best worth knowing in London society, it failed altogether to echo the trumpet, we will not say of the back parlour critics only, but of some critics distinguished in their profession, who can little have anticipated how quickly the popular verdict would modify, if not reverse their own.

It may be interesting to quote here some observations very much to the point, on the dramatic criticism of the day, in an admirable paper recently read by Mrs. Kendal before the Social Science Congress. It will hardly be denied that there are few artists competent to speak with more authority on matters theatrical, or better able to form a judgment on the true inwardness of that Press criticism to which herself and her fellow artists are so constantly subjected :—

"Existing critics generally rush into extremes, and either over praise or too cruelly condemn. The public, as a matter of course, turn to the newspapers for information, but how can any judgment be formed when either indiscriminate praise or unqualified abuse is given to almost every new piece and to the actors who interpret it? Criticism, if it is to be worth anything, should surely be criticism, but nowadays the writing of a picturesque article, replete with eulogy, or the reverse, seems to be the aim of the theatrical reviewer. Of course, the influence of the Press upon the stage is very powerful, but it will cease to be so if playgoers find that their mentors, the critics, are not trustworthy guides. The public must, after all, decide the fate of a new play. If it be bad, the Englishman

of to-day will not declare it is good because the newspapers have told him so. He will be disappointed, he will be bored, he will tell his friends so, and the bad piece will fail to draw audiences. If, on the other hand, the play is a good one, which has been condemned by the Press, it will quicken the pulse and stir the heart of an audience in spite of adverse criticism. The report that it contains the true ring will go about, and success must follow. In a word, though the Press can do very much to further the interests of the stage, it is powerless to kill good work, and cannot galvanize that which is invertebrate into life."

To determine Mary Anderson's true stage place, and to make a fair and impartial criticism of her performances is rendered further difficult by the fact, that the English stage offers in the last generation scarcely one with whom she can be compared, if we except perhaps Helen Faucit. Between herself and that great artist, middle-aged playgoers seem to find a certain resemblance; but to the present generation of playgoers Mary Anderson is an absolutely new revelation on the London boards. Recalling the roll of artists who have essayed similar parts for the last five and twenty years, we can name not one who has given as she did what we may best describe as a new stage sensation. Never was the pride of a free maiden of ancient Greece more nobly expressed than in Parthenia; never were the gradual steps from fear and abhorrence to love more finely portrayed than in the stages of her rising passion for the savage chieftain, whose captive hostage she was. Her Pauline was the old patrician beauty of France living on the stage, a true woman in spite of the selfish veneer of pride, and caste with which the traditions of the ancient *noblesse* had covered her; while Galatea found in her certainly the most poetic and beautiful representation of

that fanciful character, ever seen on any stage. This was the verdict of the public who thronged the Lyceum to its utmost capacity, during the months of the past winter. This was the verdict, too, of the largest provincial towns of the kingdom. The critics, some of them, were willing to concede to Mary Anderson the possession of every grace which can adorn a woman, and of every qualification which can make an artist attractive, with a solitary but fatal reservation—*she was devoid of genius*. But what, indeed, is genius after all? It is the magic power to touch unerringly a sympathetic chord in the human breast. The novelist, whose characters seem to be living; the painter, the figures on whose canvas appear to breathe; the actor who, while he treads the stage, is forgotten in the character he assumes; all these possess it. This was the verdict of the public upon Mary Anderson, and we are fain to believe that—*pace* the critics—it was the true one. Her *Clarice* was perhaps the least successful of her impersonations; and given as an afterpiece, it taxed unfairly the endurance of an actress, who had already been some hours upon the stage. But as a striking illustration of the reality of her performance, we may mention, that, in the scene where she is supposed by her guests to be acting, her fellow actors, who should have applauded the tragic outburst which the public divine to be real, were so disconcerted by the vehemence and seeming reality of her grief and despair, that on the first representation of "Comedy and Tragedy" they actually forgot their parts, and had to be called to task by the author for failing properly to support the star. "No man" it is said, "is a hero to his *valet de chambre*," and few indeed are the artists who can make their fellow artists

on the stage forget that the mimic passion which convulses them is but consummate art after all.

Mary Anderson's present Lyceum season will exhibit her in characters which will give opportunity for displaying powers of a widely-different order to those called forth in the last. A new Juliet and a new Lady Macbeth will show the capacity she possesses for the true exhibition of the tenderest as well as the stormiest passions which can agitate the human breast; and she may perhaps appear in Cushman's famous *rôle* of *Meg Merrilies*. In all these she invites comparison with great impersonators of these parts who are familiar to the stage. We will not anticipate the verdict of the public, but of this much we are assured that rarely can Shakespeare's favourite heroine have been represented by so much youth, and grace, and beauty, and genuine artistic ability combined. Juliet was her first part, and has always been regarded by Mary Anderson with the affection due to a first love. But it may not be generally known that she imagines her *forte* to lie rather in the exhibition of the stormier passions, and that she succeeds better in parts like *Lady Macbeth* or *Meg Merrilies*. I remember her once saying to me, as she raised her beautiful figure to its full height, and stretched her hand to the ceiling, "I am always at my best when I am uttering maledictions." Thus far, Mary Anderson has shown herself to us in characters which must give a very incomplete estimate of her powers. None indeed of the parts she assumed were adapted to bring out the highest qualities of an artist. That she has succeeded in inspiring the freshness and glow of life into plays, some of which at least, were supposed to be consigned almost to the limbo of disused stage

properties, stamps her as possessing genuine histrionic power. She has earned distinguished fame all over the Western continent. London as well as the great cities of the kingdom have hailed her as a Queen of the Stage. Such an experience as hers is rare indeed, almost solitary, in its annals. A self-trained girl, born quite out of the circle or influence of stage associations, she burst, when but sixteen, as a star on the theatrical horizon; and if her grace, her youth, her beauty, have helped her in the upward flight, they have helped alone, and could not have atoned for the want of that divine spark, which is the birthright of the artist who makes a mark upon his generation and his time. When the more recent history of the English-speaking stage shall once again be written, we do not doubt that Mary Anderson will take her fitting place, side by side with the many great artists who have so adorned it in the last half-century; with Charlotte Cushman, Helen Faucit, and Fanny Stirling, who represent its earlier glories; with Mrs. Kendal, Mrs. Bancroft, and Ellen Terry, whose names are interwoven with the triumphs of later years.

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